THE BIBLE AMONG THE NATIONS

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A STUDY OF THE GREAT TRANSLATIONS

BY

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How hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born? ACTS 2: 8

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Preface

When God gave his Word to the world the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek. Neither of these languages was to remain in permanent use, even among the people who then employed them, nor could they fitly reveal the grand message of God to other nations. That Word must be translated into different languages as men went with it among the nations. How they have done this is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of Christian work.

In the following pages an effort is made to gather up the record of these labors, as they relate to some of those translations which have exerted the widest influence upon the nations for whom they were prepared. The one object of the writer is to collect information, widely scattered and inaccessible to most readers who would be glad to know something of this inspiring theme. Nothing will more profoundly impress the Bible student

than to see how in all ages and among all people Christian scholarship has thus sought to bring God's Word within the comprehension of his people, that they may read for themselves the wonderful promises in respect to their salvation.

The first article, although not strictly a translation, is added because of its historical relation to the general subject.

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The Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan Pentateuch

Among the documents handed down from antiquity bearing directly upon the text of the Old Testament, none has greater interest than the Samaritan Pentateuch. This is a copy of the first five books of our Hebrew Bible, with such variations as have been introduced by the Samaritans, who accept it as the only book of divine authority. It is written in the ancient form of letters known as "Hebrew writing," or that style of writing popularly said to have been in use among the Jews previous to the time of Ezra. It has no vowels or diacritical marks, except that the words are separated from each other by a dot, and the end of the verse is marked by two dots, or by an asterisk.

A copy of this is still preserved at Nablûs—Neapolis of the Roman age—which claims to have been written by the great-grandson of Aaron "in the thirteenth year of the taking possession of the land of Canaan by the chil-

dren of Israel." While no credence can be given to such a claim, it is doubtless one of the oldest, possibly the oldest, copy of the text of the Pentateuch now in existence. Another ancient copy, written in 1232 A. D., is described in "Hebraica," Vol. IX, 216.

The very existence of such a document is deeply significant. It is certain that the hostile relations existing between the Jews and the Samaritans from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah would prevent their receiving it since that time. Side by side the two books, so nearly alike, so manifestly having a common origin, have remained for many centuries, yet neither shows any sign of being in any way influenced by the other. Certainly such a document ought to become a very valuable witness concerning the Pentateuch as we possess it.

I. ITS ORIGIN

How came the Samaritans to possess the Pentateuch, and recognize it as divine, while they persistently refuse to recognize any other part of our Hebrew Bible?

The origin of the Samaritan Colony is given in 2 Kings, xvii. In 720 B. C. the king of

Assyria carried Israel into captivity. The country, thus stripped of its inhabitants, was left desolate until Ezar-Haddon "brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel."[1] It seems, therefore, to have been largely of heathen origin. It certainly was in a very peculiar religious condition at the beginning. In 2 Kings, xvii, 28-41, we are told how they tried to unite the worship of the god of the land with their own heathen customs. In response to their request, the king sent one of the Jewish priests, who had been carried away among the captives, to dwell among them, and teach them the manner of the god of the land. The result was, "the people feared Jehovah, and served their own gods."[2]

It was not until about 432 B. C. that religious matters began to assume a more settled form among the Samaritans. At that time Manasseh, a brother, or perhaps a grandson, of Jaddua, the high priest at Jerusalem, having married the daughter of Sanballat, gov-

[1] 2 Kings, 17:24; see also Ezra, iv, 2.

[2] 2 Kings, 17:33.

ernor of Samaria, and in consequence having been driven from the priesthood at Jerusalem[1] took refuge in Samaria. According to Josephus[2] Sanballat obtained from Alexander the Great permission to build a temple on Mt. Gerizim, in which he constituted Manasseh high priest. To this temple came many priests when deprived of their office among the Jews, and thus the Pentateuch was introduced as the basis of their system of worship. It is altogether likely the temple was built about a century earlier than Josephus mentions, but the other statements seem well established.[3]

Three dates thus become possible when the Pentateuch might have been carried into Samaria:

1. It may have remained in the land when the Israelites were carried into captivity, a relic of the days when the true God was worshiped. The heathen settlers introduced by the Assyrian king would, according to the custom of the time, think it necessary to respect the god of the land into which they had come.

2. It might have been taken by the priest

[1]Neh., 13:28.
[2]Antiquities, II, 7, 2, and II. 8, 2.
[3]Robinson's Researches, III, 117; Ryle, Canon, 92.

sent by the Assyrian king in response to the request of the people.[1] But from the mingling of true and idolatrous customs tolerated at that time, it would not seem that the Law was much sought after, and besides, the worship then conducted was at Bethel, and not at Mt. Gerizim. Professor Karl Budde, of Strasburg, in his recent lectures in America (1898) seems to favor this idea.

3. It might have been carried to them by the fugitive priest, Manasseh, when driven from Jerusalem by Nehemiah because he had married the daughter of Sanballat.[2] Notwithstanding his sin, Manasseh was careful of the Law, and from this time we can clearly trace not only its presence, but its recognized influence in Samaria. He proved a true reformer among them. It was apparently through his influence that the temple on Mt. Gerizim was erected and the ritual services centered there, his pattern being the temple and the service at Jerusalem. He was thus able to arouse an enthusiasm for the service which became a permanent feature of the Samaritan life.[3]

[1] 2 Kings, 17:27.
[2] Neh., 13:28.
[3] Ryle, Canon, 92; Stanley, III, 159; Cheyne, Jewish Life, 31.

The fact that it is written in the ancient characters used among the Jews before the captivity would seem to favor an early introduction. If at any later date the Samaritans had gone to the Jews for religious books, they would hardly have been satisfied with the Law, but would have taken also those other books which had grown out of the Law. Besides, the bitter enmity existing between the Jews and the Samaritans at any later period would have prevented them from going to the Jews for anything. On the other hand, if the ancient Samaritans were made up partly of Jews and partly of foreigners who possessed the narrow ideas in regard to religion common in those days, we can see a reason for their seeking assistance from those who had occupied the land before them.[1]

This seems also to explain what Josephus says[2] about the character of this mixed population. He tells us that when it would be an advantage to them to claim kinship with the Jews, they said they were descended from Joseph; but when the Jews were in trouble, and they wished to avoid all responsibility or

[1] McClintock and Strong, IX, 296.
[2] Antiquities, IX, 14, 3, and II, 8, 6.

obligation to befriend them, they said they were sojourners in the land whose home was in Persia.[1]

II. ITS CHARACTER

When the first copy of this Samaritan Pentateuch was brought to Europe, in 1616 A.D., by Pietro della Valle, it attracted great attention among scholars. Morinus, a leading Roman Catholic scholar, claimed it was superior to the text of our Hebrew Bible. It was found to have many readings in common with the Septuagint where that version differs from the original. All this created discussion, and many boldly demanded that our Hebrew text ought to be revised on the basis of this Samaritan Pentateuch. One of the great battles of textual criticism was fought over this issue.

But in 1815 Gesenius, the author of our Hebrew Lexicon, and one of the greatest of Hebrew scholars, gave the matter a careful study, and settled the question in favor of our regular text. He proves very clearly that the variations between the Samaritan and the Hebrew texts may be traced to causes which show that the changes have been made in the

[1]Schurer, Jewish People, II, 1, 5.

Samaritan, and not in the Hebrew. He gives eight classes of variations, which we may again condense into three:

1. Such as arise from blunders in copying, supplying quiescent letters, regular for irregular forms of words, adding paragogical letters, etc.

2. Variations caused by the desire to conform certain passages to the Samaritan mode of thought, as chronological changes, the substitution of Mt. Gerizim for Jerusalem, etc.

3. Variations caused by an attempt to remove supposed obscurities in the text.[1]

It will thus be seen that the variations are of little consequence, and tell against the Samaritan.

It is not in its variations, but in its substantial agreement with our text, that we place its value. After all the reasons for a difference are presented, the fact remains that they are substantially one.

A great deal has been written about the frequent agreement between this Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint where they differ from our Hebrew text. How is it that the

[1]Smith's Bible Dic., 2805.

Samaritan and the Septuagint should thus agree against the Hebrew? Some say the Septuagint translators used the Samaritan text in trnanslating; others think the Samaritan was corrected so as to conform to the Septuagint after it appeared; others still think that both the Samaritan and the Septuagint were based on Hebrew manuscripts which had the usual variations common to all hand-written documents.

That this agreement is not to be regarded as a mere attempt to secure uniformity is evident from the fact that they disagree more frequently than they agree, while in neither their agreement or disagreement is there any system. It is far more likely in either case to have arisen from the imperfect work of the scribe.

III. ITS DIFFERENT VERSIONS

Just as the Jews after the exile required an Aramaic version in the Synagogue service, so the Samaritans had a popular version. In daily life they used a mixture of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac, which differed in many respects from the common dialect of the Jews. According to Samaritan authority this version was made by their High Priest, Nathaniel, who

died about 20 B.C. Some would place it as early as the time when their temple was built on Mt. Gerizim; others place it much later than Nathaniel, but it seems almost certain it was made before the destruction of the second temple. Like the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, it is slavishly literal, being an almost exact counterpart of the original Hebrew-Samaritan codex, with all its various readings. This version becomes in turn a check on the original, and thus strengthens the evidence of the original as to the correctness of our Hebrew text.

There was apparently a Greek version, although no complete copy is now known to exist.[1]

An Arabic version, written in Samaritan letters about 1070 A.D., is a very close translation, although making frequent changes to avoid anthropomorphic ideas of God.

IV. ITS VALUE

The Samaritan text has been so disfigured by errors in transcription and by arbitrary changes that it has no great critical value. When it has been subject to a thorough revi-

[1]Smith's Bible Dic., 2813.

sion it will be of great use in textual criticism. It has great interest and value on account of its antique letters and its lack of modern accent and diacritical marks. But when we look at its testimony in a larger way, as historical or literary, it has a value which puts it in the front rank of documentary evidence for the general accuracy of our Pentateuch. It becomes evident from a comparison of the Samaritan and the Jewish copies that the later Jews have not in any way tried to change or falsify these primary documents on which so much depends. The Pentateuch as the Samaritans have it, and as the Jews have given it to us, is manifestly one book. Two independent witnesses confirm the fact beyond a doubt.

The Septuagint Translation

The Septuagint Translation

"The Septuagint" is the name given to the earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. Not only is it the oldest, but it is also one of the most valuable of the translations coming down to us from antiquity. Whether we consider its fidelity to the original, its influence over the Jews for whom it was prepared, its relation to the New Testament Greek, or its place in the Christian Church, it stands preëminent in the light it casts on all our investigations of the Scriptures.

I. ITS ORIGIN

No one knows the secret of its origin. In the prologue of the apochryphal book, "Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach,"[1] the writer says: "For the same things uttered in Hebrew and translated into another tongue have not the same force in them; and not only these things, but the Law itself, and the prophets,

[1] 200–130 B.C.

and the rest of the books, have no small difference when they are spoken in their own language." This seems to show that the Scriptures were then known in a Greek translation.

The earliest account of the origin of the translation is found in the celebrated "Epistle of Aristeas," a Jewish Alexandrian monk, whose date Buhl fixes as earlier than 198 B. C., a full account of which is found in Josephus.[1] According to this account, Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, 285-247 B.C., being of a literary disposition, was making a collection of the world's best literature. His librarian, Demetrius Phalerius, called his attention to the Hebrew Scriptures as being worthy of a place in his collection on account of their great wisdom. The king at once sends ambassadors to Eleazer, the High Priest at Jerusalem, loading them with gold and jewels and royal salutations, and requests him to send, for the royal library, a copy of the Scriptures, with wise men who can translate them into the Greek. Eleazer selects seventy-two learned scribes, and with presents for the king, puts into their hands a precious copy of the mem-

[1] Antiquities, XII, 2. 4.

branes upon which they had their laws written in golden letters. Upon the arrival of the scribes they are conducted to a house on an island, Pharos, where they could consult and translate without distraction. After seventy-two days the translation was completed and handed to the royal librarian. He called together a number of the leading Jews of the city and read it to them. It was at once approved, and a curse pronounced on any one who should alter it. When it was read to the king he was so delighted that he sent the scribes home laden with a present of ten beds with feet of silver and furnishings suited to them, a cup valued at thirty talents, ten purple garments, a very beautiful crown, a hundred pieces of the finest woven linen, and also vials, and dishes, and vessels for pouring, and two golden cisterns.

Later writers made many additions to this tradition. Philo, born about 20 A.D., tells us these men were actually inspired for their work, so that although each one made a separate translation, they were found to agree word for word.[1] Augustine afterward advocated the same idea.[2] Irenæus, 120-202 A.D., elabo-

[1] Buhl, Canon III.
[2] De Doct. Christ. II, 15.

rates this idea still further. In his work, "Against Heresies," III, 21, 2, he tells us that Ptolemy, fearing these Jewish elders might conspire to conceal the truth found in their sacred books, separated them from each other, and commanded them each one to write a translation. They did so, and when their translations were read before the king, they were found to give the same words and the same names from beginning to end, so that even the Gentiles perceived that the Scriptures were interpreted by the Spirit of God. Justin Martyr, who died 165 A.D., says[1] that the king built as many cots or cells as there were translators, and ordered his officers to prevent any communication between them, and tells us that he had seen these cots. Epiphanius, who died 403 A.D., tells us the king built thirty-six cottages, and put two men in each, and the result was an exact agreement in every point, because the Holy Spirit had directed all their work. Clements Alexandrinus, who died 217 A.D.,[2] says each one of the seventy-two made a translation, and their work was found to agree in meaning and purpose, to the

[1] Address to the Greeks, Chap. 13.
[2] Strom. I, 22.

end that Grecian ears might have the benefit of the Scriptures.

In this tradition it is hard to separate the truth from the fiction. That it is not all true does not need argument. Even as early as the time of Jerome, 420 A.D., doubts were entertained as to its accuracy. But it may be regarded as a settled fact that at least the Pentateuch was translated during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and the statement in the Book of Wisdom shows the entire Bible must have been completed some time before 132 A.D. We may then fix upon the two dates, 286 and 132, as the extreme limits within which the translating was done, with the strong probability that it was nearer the former date.[1]

But who did the translating? That it was not done by persons thoroughly trained in the use of the Greek language, such as the king would have appointed, is evident from the character of the translation. He may have been anxious to secure a copy of so celebrated a book as the Jewish Law, but his Greek scholars did not have the work of translating in their own hands. If they had translated it

[1]Buhl, Canon 110. Encyc. Brit., XXI, 668.

they would have conformed it to the standards of Greek grammar. This has not been done. Buhl[1] describes it as the jargon unintelligible to a Greek. He thinks a Greek could make absolutely nothing of many of its expressions, and argues that if the work had been designed to give the cultured classes of Alexandrian society a knowledge of Jewish Law, it certainly would have been subjected to a thorough revision before being put in their hands.

On the other hand there is the best of evidence for thinking it was not made by learned men from Palestine. The knowledge of the Hebrew text does not come up to the well-known attainments of the Palestinian Rabbis. Many Hebrew words are left untranslated, evidently from ignorance as to their true meaning. Hebrew idioms are frequently overlooked, and the archaic forms of Hebrew poetry are poorly understood.

But if we consider the necessities of the Jews in Alexandria, and remember the complex influences affecting their language, we find a clue by which we may determine, with strong probability, the persons likely to engage

[1]Canon 113.

in such a work. They still cherished the traditions and maintained their love for their native land, and religion, and language. But they were thrown into the more energetic elements of the Greek civilization. Between these two influences they could not become proficient in the use of either the Hebrew or Greek language. And when they found it necessary to have their Scriptures in the language of their daily life, the demand would not be met by a thoroughly classical rendering of the Hebrew, but by a dialect in which many Hebrew idioms would be transferred to the Greek. To produce such a rendering, men having a traditional regard for the Hebrew, and also having a practical knowledge of the mixture of Hebrew and Greek in daily use among them, would be best fitted. And this we believe to be the fact in regard to the authors of this Septuagint translation. They were Alexandrian Jews, who translated into the peculiar form of Greek in daily use among their people.[1]

[1]Schürer, II, 3, 163.

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE TRANSLATION

The different parts are very unequal in merit.

The Pentateuch shows careful effort to produce an exact, and in many cases a slavishly literal rendering.[1] In other places the translation is peculiarly forcible and appropriate.[2] It does not, however, always maintain this high standard. On this account some have argued that different persons must have been employed on different parts of the Pentateuch.[3] Particular attention is called to the inferiority of the translation of the fragments of poetry found in Gen., 49, and Deut., 32 and 33.

When we pass from the Pentateuch to the Prophets we find a growing weakness in the translation. In the earlier Prophets, or historical books, the rendering is quite exact and clear; but the Prophets are very inadequately and often very badly translated, so much so that the sense is often hidden, if not entirely lost. In Jeremiah, besides this imperfection of rendering, we find such a remarkable transposition of chapters as to lead to the conclusion that the translators must have used a

[1] Driver, Samuel 41.
[2] Horne, I, 265.
[3] Buhl, 116.

different Hebrew text from that now found in our Hebrew Bible. As instances of such changes we note the following:

Heb.	Chap.	49:34-39	is in the	Sept.	25:14-18.
"	"	46:	" "	"	26.
"	"	47:1-7	" "	"	29:1-7.
"	"	48:	" "	"	31.

Sometimes passages of the Hebrew are omitted in the Septuagint, as Jer., 10:6, 7, 8, 10; 33:14-26; 39:4-13. Many other variations are noted in Smith's Bible Dic.[1] and in Driver.[2]

Daniel was so very deficient that it was wholly rejected by the early Christian Church, and a translation made by Theodotion in 16 A.D. used in its place. For a long time the Septuagint translation of Daniel was supposed to be lost, but in 1772 it was discovered and published at Rome, and later a critical edition of it was issued by Tischendorf. But it is so poor as to be of no value whatever. The book of Ezra is also so changed as to be almost a new book.[3]

The poetical books are very unequal. The Psalms are well executed.[4] Proverbs is also

[1] 1262.
[2] 41.
[3] Buhl, 48.
[4] Driver, Sam. xli. Buhl, 121.

well translated, but the other poetical books are quite inferior, the fine framing of the form and the delicate conception of the thought being often conspicuously lacking. Of the book of Job, Driver says,[1] "The translation is often unintelligible." Buhl says of it,[2] "One of the most willfully translated books is the book of Job, whose translator wished to pose as a poetarum lector." The Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes, on the other hand, are so slavishly literal as largely to destroy the effect of the original form.

Passing from these general characteristics, we naturally ask as to the accuracy with which the thought is transferred, for that, rather than the mere form, is the great question. And it is to be noted that we find the same lack here as in the more general features of language and style. For example, we find one Hebrew word rendered by different Greek words in the same sentence, and the reverse also occurs Ex., 12:13, 23; Numb., 15:4, 5. There is also a manifest toning down of the strength of the original thought, the clear conception of the original thought being made dim by the medium through which it passes.

[1]Sam. 41.
[2]Canon, 122.

The translation is, indeed, a great work, a most creditable work for the time when it was prepared, an indispensable work for the Jew who had lost his familiarity with his mother-tongue, and for the Christian Church, which finds in it an unimpeachable witness for the general accuracy of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

III. THE SOURCES OF THE SEPTUAGINT

The fact that the Septuagint has so many and such important variations from our Hebrew text leads to the enquiry, From what was this translation made?

Some, noting the fact that in more than a thousand places where the Septuagint varies from our Hebrew text, it agrees with the Samaritan, have concluded it must have been made from that, and not from the Hebrew itself. But while the Septuagint agrees in so many places with the Samaritan, as against the Hebrew, there are yet still more places where our Hebrew and the Septuagint agree as against the Samaritan. It is also a fact that in the parts of the Septuagint for which no Samaritan copy exists, because they did not accept anything but the Pentateuch, and

which must therefore have been translated from the Hebrew, the same tendency to variation exists. And further, the constant friction between the Jews and the Samaritans would certainly have prevented the Jews from going to the Samaritans for an authoritative copy of their own Scriptures.

Others have supposed that the original from which the Septuagint and the Samaritan versions were made was a Hebrew text older than that now found in our Hebrew Bible. It is argued by Gesenius and others who accept this theory, that many copies of the Hebrew were made by different scribes, all subject to the usual variations of hand-copying. If we could admit the fundamental assumption on which this theory rests, that such differences were not considered essential, this would enable us at once and easily to explain these discrepancies. But we do not admit the assumption. The whole effort of Jewish learning has been to preserve the old text without alteration.

The explanation of this difference does not demand any such extreme assumptions. We have but to remember the manner of making copies in those days to see how easily differences might arise and how they would naturally

become magnified. But the care taken of the Hebrew by the Jew in Palestine was much greater than the care taken of the Greek by the Jew in Alexandria. We know, too, how fond the scribe was of showing his superior wisdom by suggesting emendations, which he would not dare insert in his Hebrew, but might in his Greek, and how easily these emendations might pass from the margin into the body of the text. Even the Hebrew has not entirely escaped this danger, as is manifest from the notes in our Hebrew Bibles, but all the conditions of the time and the characteristics of the people require us to place far greater reliance on the accuracy of the Hebrew than on that of the Greek. We believe, then, that the differences may be nothing more than the results of copying, and that the strong presumption is that the Hebrew comes much nearer to the original writing than the Greek.

IV. HISTORY OF THE TEXT

The earliest copies of the Septuagint, being made by hand, would soon come to differ among themselves, according to the judgment and accuracy of the scribe making them. This danger is anticipated in the curse invoked

in the Epistle of Aristeas upon any one changing it.[1]

But this scribal carelessness was not the only cause of degeneration. Justin Martyr[2] directly charges the Jews with deliberately altering their Scriptures to avoid the force of the arguments drawn from them by the Christians. And it would seem the charge might have been reversed also, for the Christians did sometimes resort to very extreme methods to carry their points against the Jews.

The text became at length so utterly unreliable that Origen, 185-254 A.D., made an attempt to purify it. Had he been content with that one object, the purification of the text, his work would have been of lasting benefit to the world. But unfortunately he combined with that effort another of the greatest magnitude—namely, the attempt to determine the relation between the Septuagint and the Hebrew, and by combining the two threw such confusion into the whole that he left the text in a worse condition than he found it.

His plan was to arrange different versions in parallel columns, and so discover the true read-

[1] McClintock & Strong Cyclopædia, IX, 539.
[2] Dialogue with Trypho, Chap. 71.

ing. In six such columns he placed the following texts.

1	2	3
The Original Hebrew.	The Hebrew written in Greek letters.	The Greek translation of Aquila.
4	5	6
The Greek translation of Symmachus.	The Septuagint.	The Greek translation of Theodotion.

These Greek translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion were made later than the Septuagint, the first in the interests of the Jews, and the last in the interests of the Christians. In this great work of Origen, consisting of about fifty large volumes, made in Cæsarea, and known ever after as the Hexapla of Origen, he sought by an intricate system of marks to indicate the corrections needed in the text. His work does not seem ever to have been copied, although Jerome tells us he made much use of it in preparing the Vulgate. It was destroyed in the seventh century in some unknown manner.

This effort of Origen to purify the text actually resulted in a more hopeless confusion than before, for the scribes, not understanding or heeding his marks, wrote his corrections as part of the original text, and so it has become

impossible, with our present appliances, to obtain a reliable copy of the original.[1]

The work of revision was again undertaken by Lucian, a presbyter at Antioch, who died in 312 A.D. His work, based on a careful study of the original Hebrew, was warmly welcomed by Chrysostom, and soon became the authority throughout Syria and Asia Minor, and was used by Ulfilas in making his Gothic translation.[2]

Still another effort was made by Hesychius, an Egyptian Bishop, martyred in 312 A.D., who introduced very few changes in the text. His work was accepted in Alexandria and throughout Egypt, as that of Origen was throughout Palestine.

For our knowledge of the text of the Septuagint we are dependent on the early manuscripts. Three of these hold supreme authority, their rank being in the order mentioned.

1. The Vatican. This is an uncial dating from the fourth century[3], preserved in the Vatican library at Rome, and which is generally quoted as "B." Professor Toy[4] says it

[1] Keil, II, 239. Buhl, 128. Driver, Samuel, 45.
[2] Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, VI, 488.
[3] 350 A.D.
[4] Quotations in the New Testament, 11, 14.

probably comes nearest to the text of the first century, being substantially identical with it. Schürer[1] says it holds the first rank with respect to the purity of the text. Schaff[2] says it is the best as well as the oldest of the manuscripts. It was probably written in Egypt, but was brought to Rome in 1448. It contains all the Old Testament, except Gen., 1:1 to 46:28, and some of the Psalms.

2. The Codex Alexandrinus, generally quoted as "A." It dates from the fifth century[3], and is written in the uncial letters. It was probably written in Alexandria. In 1628 it was presented to King Charles I of England by the Greek Patriarch, Cyril Lucar, of Constantinople, and is now in the British Museum. The Old Testament is complete in three small folio volumes, containing 640 pages. There are no accents or breathings, and no spaces between the words, but the paragraphs are separated. It has many corrections, which Driver thinks have been made to secure a closer uniformity with the Hebrew.

3. The Codex Sinaiticus. This was discovered by Tischendorf in the Convent of Mt.

[1] Jewish People, II, 3, 166.
[2] Comp. to the New Test., 118.
[3] 450 A.D.

Sinai, and is now in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg. It is quoted as (Aleph), the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It dates from the middle of the fourth century. It has many corrections, not being as carefully written as the Vatican, with which it has a very close agreement. Some would even give this the first place for authority among the manuscripts, but that is generally given to "B."

THE PRINTED TEXT.

Since the invention of printing several editions of the Septuagint have been issued, the more important of which are:

1. The Polyglotta Complutensis, 1514-1517.

2. The Editio Veneta, or Aldina, 1518.

Both these editions are based on a comparison of different manuscripts, and do not therefore represent any special text.

3. The Roman Edition, Vaticana or Sixtina, 1587. This is based on the Vatican manuscript, under the authority of Pope Sixtus V, and gives readings from other manuscripts. This text has been followed in most modern editions, especially those by Van Ess. In 1850 Tischendorf issued an edition of it, embodying also the readings of the Sinaiticus

manuscript, which he had recently found. This was again revised, in 1880, by Nestle, who collated with it many other manuscripts.

4. The Codex Alexandrinus was first published by Grabe in 1707-1719, and in 1816-1828 an edition was published in fac-simile letters, on which great labor was bestowed.

5. In 1862 Tischendorf issued a fac-simile edition of the Codex Sinaiticus in four volumes, at the expense of the Emperor of Russia. He also issued an edition in the ordinary Greek type, which has great value.

6. But all these have been in a manner superseded by an edition just issued from the Cambridge press, under the editorship of Dr. Swete, in three volumes. It contains the text of "B" with the variations of the five leading uncial manuscripts on the margin.

V. THE VALUE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

From this study we can easily see that the Septuagint is a most valuable document for purposes of Biblical criticism. Its value is indeed lessened by the corruptions which have become so identified with it as to become almost inseparable from it, but with all this, it throws an immense flood of light on our

Hebrew Bible. It is the medium through which the religious ideas of the Hebrews were brought to the attention of the world. To the Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, in Rome, in Syria, and even in Palestine itself, the Septuagint became the great treasury of Scriptural knowledge. Christ used it when in the Jewish synagogue. Paul quoted it when preaching among the Greeks and the Romans. Stephen, the first martyr, died with its words on his lips. Grenfield says there are at least 350 direct quotations from the Old Testament in the New, of which not more than fifty differ materially from the Septuagint. The indirect allusions to its language are found all through the New Testament. No doubt much of the knowledge of God and the general expectation of a coming Messiah pervading the world when Christ came, might be traced to the circulation of the Septuagint among people to whom the Hebrew was a sealed language.

Its value is increased by the fact that it was made by scholars to whom the Hebrew was yet a spoken language, and when its technical terms and idioms and unusual words would be better understood than after it fell into disuse. In history, in archæology, and especially in

religious customs, it is almost indispensable to the student. The Greek term becomes the key which unlocks the Hebrew. The light of the Greek word reveals a beauty in the Hebrew which otherwise would have remained hidden. It gives practically a bilingual rendering of the Old Testament. Being made from manuscripts far older than any now in existence, it has the value of an independent witness as to the true character of the original. It has thus become almost as useful to us as a Hebrew lexicon for the light it throws on the dark passages of the Hebrew text.[1]

Greater still is the value of the Septuagint when we consider its relation to the New Testament. The transference of Hebrew ideas into Greek forms of thought became a necessity to the extension of God's kingdom among the nations. But the difference in their methods of expression was radical. The Hebrew mind lays the basis of all thought in a physical conception, and passes up into higher, spiritual realms. The very names for God and for the human soul have thus a physical basis which was never lost sight of when the thought was carried up to its most sublime exaltation.

[1]Hatch, Essays in Biblical Greek, 15.

The Greek mind was different. Between the physical and the spiritual they saw no such relation, but rather found an impassable barrier between them.

In the Septuagint Greek we see the process by which this change of conception was brought about. It does not use the old classical Greek as it existed four centuries before Christ, through which the Greek thought finds its noblest expression, but Greek as used in a foreign country and by a foreign people. The Alexandrian Jews were in the midst of Greek ideas, and used the Greek language, but they used it to express Hebrew ideas, and with their minds full of Hebrew methods of expression. Hence their Greek is a dialect by itself. They intentionally put new meaning into the Greek words they were using. They wrote in Greek and they spoke in Greek, but they put into the Greek words a meaning which to the native-born Greek would seem entirely out of place.

The circumstances were substantially the same when the New Testament was written. To read its meaning aright we must look at the Greek words through Jewish eyes, we must consider their meaning as they would

appeal to the Jewish mind and heart. And for this the Greek of the Septuagint prepares the way as no other book does. It is a noble bridge, with one pier securely embedded in the immovable elements of the Hebrew language and the other resting firmly in the Greek language, over whose wide-springing arch the great thoughts of God have passed to enrich the world.

A translation which has been so honored of God and so useful to men must have a value not easily estimated. That the Jew should himself prepare the translation which was to be the most powerful instrument for extending the truth which lies at the basis of the New Testament teachings, shows how God is working to make all things build up His kingdom. Had the Christian Church made this translation, their enemies would have rejected it as partial and unfair, but when the Jew himself makes it, all criticism is disarmed. The time came when he would have gladly disowned his own work, because it told so plainly of the Messiah, but it was then too late. It could not then be thrust aside, but remains to this day a monument to the faithfulness of the Jew and a lighthouse to the Christian.

The Syriac Translation

The Syriac Translation

The name Syria is applied somewhat vaguely in New Testament times to the region north and east of Palestine. During the first centuries of our Christian era it was the center of a very active Christian life. A record of the efforts made to provide a version of the Scriptures for the use of this people becomes interesting when we remember that this is the first Christian translation of the Bible, and still more so when we consider the peculiarities of the different copies which have come down to us. The discovery of new documents within the last few years has added much to the interest of the study.

There is a tradition among the Syrians themselves that their translation of the Old Testament grew out of the intercourse between Hiram, King of Tyre, and King Solomon, when the Temple was being built. A later tradition assigns it to the period when the Samaritan Pentateuch was formed. But a

more probable date is about 150 A.D., when the Gospel was first introduced into that country. If this be so, it has the distinction of being the first translation of the Old Testament for Christian use.

Eusebius[1] has an interesting story about the introduction of Christianity among this people, when Thaddeus, one of the Seventy, was sent by the Apostle Thomas to their king, Abgarus, and very many were converted through his labors. We also know that Paul preached and founded churches in that region.[2] These early efforts were attended with immediate and great results. From that time until the Mohammedan influence, in 634 A.D., began to crush out the intellectual and spiritual life of the people, the Gospel had a great number of most devoted followers throughout all that region. We may still read the story of its success in the magnificent mosques at Damascus, and Beirut, and Tripoli, as well as the Aksa at Jerusalem and St. Sophia at Constantinople, which were originally built by these Syrian Christians as churches, but were afterward transformed and desecrated by the

[1]Ch. Hist., I, 13.
[2]Gal. 1:21; Acts 15:41.

Mohammedans.[1] Such a work would at once open the way for the translation of the Scriptures for their use.

The translation itself favors this origin, for there is a flavor of Christian sentiment in many places, and a strong Messianic tone given to the prophecies which betray their origin. That it was not all made at one time or by one person is also probable. Like the Vulgate and the Septuagint, it is the product of many hands, and in its growth reveals the progress of the work.

The different copies of the Syriac text which have come down to us present such marked differences that it will be desirable to give a brief description of them.

The translation which circulated most widely among the people, and was everywhere employed in the services of the church, is known as the Peshitto, or the Simple. Various reasons have been given for this name. Some find it in the fact of its general use; others in the simple language employed; others think it was given to distinguish it from a later version which introduced many of the various readings and marks collated by Origen.[2]

[1] Schaff-Herzog, 2281.
[2] Buhl, 185.

Little is known in regard to its origin, but it probably dates from the introduction of Christianity, of which it would be the natural result. We may safely assign it to the latter half of the second century, probably to the early years of that century. Its very early origin may be inferred from the fact that it embraced only those books earliest accepted as canonical,[1] that it circulated among all parties into which the Syrian church was soon divided, and that it was used in all their theological literature.[2] Even in the fourth century Ephraem Syrus finds it necessary to explain words which had become antiquated.

The Old Testament was made directly from the Hebrew, the New from the Greek. Its fidelity and clearness are remarkable, and make it especially valuable as an aid to the study of the original text of the Bible. DeRossi prefered it to all other ancient versions, and says it closely follows the order of the sacred text, rendering word for word, and is more pure than any other.[3] Some parts of it are more reliable than others, but almost all critics look upon it with great approbation, and consider

[1] II and III John, II Peter, Jude, and Revelation are not found in it.
[2] Weiss, 448.
[3] Horne, 270.

it as of the highest value in critical study. Schaff[1] calls it "the queen of ancient versions, since while it yields to none in accuracy and faithfulness, it is idiomatic and as unfettered as an original composition." The Peshitto text was printed at Vienna in 1555, at the expense of the Emperor Ferdinand I, and later in the Paris Polyglot in 1645, and in the London Polyglot in 1657. In 1823 Samuel Lee edited the Old Testament for the British and Foreign Bible Society, which published a complete Syriac Bible in 1826. In 1874 our American Bible Society published the entire Bible under the supervision of our missionaries in Urumiah. This edition has become a standard authority. A "literal translation of the New Testament into English," by James Murdoch, was issued in New York in 1851.

Another text can be traced back to 508, when the Monophysite branch of the Syrian church prepared a translation based on the Septuagint. This was again revised in the seventh century by Paul of Tela. Its value consists in the help it affords in the Hexaplar text of Origen. The New Testament was also revised about the same time by Thomas of

[1]Comp., 152.

Harkel. It follows Origen's Hexaplar text in a slavish manner, and continually violates the Syriac grammar and linguistic usage.[1] Schrivener[2] calls it "the most servile version of the Scriptures ever made." But this absurd literalness makes it the more valuable for critical purposes.

A very interesting contribution to the study of this text was made by Dr. Cureton in 1858, when he published a fragment of the Gospels containing many remarkable variations from the Peshitto. The manuscripts from which this study was made were brought in 1842 from one of the monasteries of the Nitrian desert, and give every evidence of a very early origin. Dr. Cureton himself placed them in the fifth century, on account of certain peculiarities in the headings of Matthew's Gospel, and believed they contain the very language of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel.[3] While this text varies frequently from the Peshitto, it has yet such general similarity to it as to lead to the impression that both may depend on a still older version, possibly that found in Tatian's Diatessaron. Many careful scholars agree with

[1] Bleek, II, 446.
[2] 289.
[3] Schaff, Comp., 156.

Dr. Cureton that these fragments represent an older text than the Peshitto, and are more valuable for critical purposes. Others do not assign them so high a position.

Another text of the Gospels has been preserved in a Harmony, prepared by Tatian (a native Syrian, as he tells us in his Address to the Greeks, Chap. XLII), about 155 A.D., which he called "The Diatessaron," because it was an account of the life of Christ made by arranging in one narrative all the facts found in the four Gospels. This work is frequently mentioned by the early Christian writers. Eusebius[1] says, "Tatian formed a certain combination and collection of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title of Diatessaron, and which is still in the hands of some." Ephraem Syrus, who died in 373, wrote a commentary on it, in which he frequently quotes the text. The original work of Tatian has long been missing, and many modern scholars denied the accuracy of the statement of Eusebius. But search among the old manuscripts vindicates his statement, so that while we have not the original work of Tatian, we

[1]Ch. Hist., IV, 29.

can trace its history. Theodore, an Eastern Bishop, in 450 found 200 copies of it in his diocese alone. Victor, Bishop of Capua in 546, tells of finding a work of Tatian, and from his description we know it was this Harmony of the Gospels. About the year 1000 it was translated into Arabic, and a copy of this Arabic translation was presented to the Vatican library in 1719. Another copy came to light in 1886. The text of this Arabic translation was published on the jubilee of Pope Leo XIII in 1888, and in 1894 the Rev. J. Hamlyn Hill published an English translation, so that from this translation and from the fragments found in the commentary of Ephraem Syrus, we now know that the Diatessaron was made up from our four Gospels, and that these four Gospels were translated into Syriac and were circulating among the churches as early as 155 A.D. Whether Tatian himself made the translation, or whether this was the first attempt to produce such a translation for the benefit of the Syrian churches, are questions which must wait for more light before they can be settled positively. But it is a great gain to know that our four Gospels were then in use in substan-

tially the same form as we have them to-day.[1] Tatian omits the genealogies of Christ, the last twelve verses of Mark, Luke 1:1-4, and John 8:1-11, but otherwise records all the facts found in our Gospels.[2] It continued in use among the Syrian churches for about three centuries, when the church authorities commanded that it should give place to the four complete Gospels as we now have them.[3] Many leading scholars of England and Germany, Zahn among them, think Tatian's text is the oldest form of the Syriac translation.

But the most romantic, and in some respects the most important, chapter in the history of this text is connected with the finding, in 1892, of the Sinaitic Palimpsest of the Syriac Gospels by Mrs. Lewis and her sister, in the Convent of St. Katherine, on Mt. Sinai, where in 1844 Tischendorf rescued the famous Greek Codex Sinaiticus from the waste basket of the monks. It is written on strong vellum, having 284 pages, with two columns on each page. The original text of the Gospels has been washed off, and the sheets used to record the lives of some women saints whose history

[1] Hill's Diatessaron, Introduction.
[2] Wilkinson, 96.
[3] Mrs. Lewis, 17.

the monks evidently found more interesting than the life of Christ. These were photographed, and on a second visit, in 1893, with the aid of English scholars, were transcribed, restoratives being applied to reveal the almost obliterated original ~~Greek~~ writing of the Gospels. In 1894 this recovered text was published. Mrs. Lewis, during the same year, published an English translation. The readings of this Codex agree in the main with the Greek Codex Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, as also with the Peshitto and the Curetonian fragments, showing that the general text of the Gospels remains unchanged. But it has many peculiarities which show its independence. Its relation to the Diatessaron remains yet undetermined. Many of its characteristic differences incline to the readings of the Cureton fragments, so that the question has been raised as to the relation between them. Rendel Harris, one of its editors, thinks that in it we have the very first attempt at rendering the Gospels into Syriac, of which both Tatian and the Curetonian are revisions.[1] On the other hand it is held in Schrivener's Introduction that the Peshitto is the original text,

[1] Mrs. Lewis, XXXII.

changed somewhat in the Curetonian and still more in the Lewis Palimpsest. Mr. Harris says the recovery of the Lewis Codex marks an epoch in New Testament studies.[1] It is yet too early to speak with authority on the relation between these texts, but the general tenor of all is to confirm the opinion that the Gospels were translated and circulated freely among the Syrian churches long before the end of the second century.

There is also much discussion as to the relation between the Syriac and the Septuagint. As found at present, many of the readings of the Septuagint, where they differ from the Hebrew, are found in the Syrian text. The question is, did the translators consult the Septuagint, or did both the Syriac and the Septuagint use a text which differed from our Hebrew text, or are these cases of agreement the work of critics and scribes who have prepared copies since the work of translating was done?

It is noted that the places where the Septuagint and the Syriac agree as against the Hebrew are not those where critical difficulties would seem to call for a consultation of author-

[1] S. S. Times, Apr. 22, 1893.

ities, but are rather of a liturgical character, being found largely in the Psalms, so that it does not seem that they relied on the Septuagint as against the Hebrew. Further, when we consider the very general use of the Septuagint, as the text on which the greater part of the Jews depended, it would not be at all strange if its familiar renderings should in many cases affect the Syriac translation. It must also be remembered that both the Syriac and the Septuagint were made from a Hebrew text far older than any of the manuscripts now in existence, and it is possible that where the Septuagint and the Syriac now agree against the Hebrew, it may have agreed with the Hebrew text they both followed. And lastly we must remember also how much room is left for change in the manner of copying then in use.

Although the text is thus complicated, there is yet a substantial agreement among all scholars as to its value in literary criticism. Its great age, its evident fidelity to the original, and the fact that its history is so well known as to prevent any suspicion as to its genuineness, give it great importance. There have

been many translations of the Bible since this was made, but few of them have such an interesting history or have been of greater service to the church or to the Christian scholar.

The Vulgate Translation

The Vulgate Translation

We have seen how the Greek-speaking world found the Word of Life through the Septuagint, and the Syriac-speaking people of the North found it through the Peshitto. When it began to make its way westward it met nations to whom the Latin was the native tongue, and a translation into that language became a necessity.

The beginnings of this Latin version are lost amid the clouds which hang around the early history of the Church. But after the first appearance of the work we can trace three well defined steps in its development.

I. THE OLD LATIN

It is well established that the translation had its beginning in North Africa, where at a very early day the truth won some of its grandest triumphs. Here the Latin was the recognized language, not only of the common people, but of the higher classes also, while at

Rome the educated classes used only the Greek. Tertullian, one of the Christian leaders at Carthage, 145-220 A.D.,[1] speaks of a version in common use which differed from the Greek original, and which he speaks of as "rude and simple," indicating its origin. In it the principles of Latin grammar were constantly sacrificed to obtain a literal rendering of the Greek, and often the Greek word itself was transferred to the Latin translation. It is plainly the work of earnest Christians, who had but little education.

Augustine, 430,[2] says very many such attempts at translating were made. "The translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted, but the Latin translations are out of all number. For in the early days of the faith every man who happened to get his hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge of the two languages, be it ever so little, ventured upon the work of translating."

We can thus trace the existence of a Latin translation in Africa as early as the middle of

[1] On Monogamy, Chap. 11.
[2] Christian Doctrine, 2, 11.

the second century. Some have even argued that the Old Testament was begun, at least among the Jews, before the beginning of our Christian era. It was a very rude but literal rendering of the Septuagint, and so included the apochryphal books which had no place in the Hebrew canon. Although it suffered greatly from the effect of transcription, it does not seem to have been officially revised, and even after the work of Jerome gave a far better Latin rendering, it was carefully guarded and universally used among the churches of Northern Africa. To this first rude attempt we must trace all the great versions now in use throughout the Protestant world. This is the mountain spring whose healing waters have flowed down through the Vulgate and branched out into the German, Hollandish, French, and English Bibles, bringing beauty and life wherever they have gone.

II. THE ITALA

When this rude Latin translation began to be used in the churches of Italy, which was the case as soon as the churches began to use the Latin instead of the Greek language, its fidelity to the original at once gave it a strong

hold, but its defiance of Latin grammar and culture was offensive. Efforts were soon made for its improvement. At first it would seem that any one was at liberty to introduce such changes as seemed to him necessary or desirable. But in the fourth century the North Italian church authorities made a revision of the African text. These efforts to adapt the Latin translation which came from Africa, resulted in what is generally known as the Itala, and which is strongly recommended by Augustine, who says,[1] "Among these translations the Itala is to be preferred because it keeps closer to the words of the original without prejudice to clearness of expression." In the same section he adds, further, "The Latin texts of the Old Testament are to be corrected, if necessary, by the authority of the Greeks, and especially by that of those who, though they were seventy in number, are said to have translated with one voice." This allusion to the Septuagint reveals a fact which must not be forgotten in all this work of early Latin translation, namely, that the Septuagint, and not the original Hebrew, was the basis of every effort. The knowledge of Hebrew had

[1] De Doct. Christ., II, 15.

fallen so low that it was practically beyond their reach.

But all these efforts to improve the Latin text ended in greater confusion, for it became impossible to tell what was genuine and what the fancied improvement of some individual, and the Bible, so variously rendered, had no power as an ultimate standard to which all could appeal. Toward the close of the fourth century (382 A.D.) Pope Damasus began an effort to secure a Latin text which should be at once accurate and scholarly.

III. THE VULGATE

In 382 the Pope called to his assistance Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymous, known throughout the Christian world as Jerome, and committed the task of revision to him.

Jerome was born in Dalmatia, northeast of the Adriatic, about 340, and died in Bethlehem, Palestine, in 420. He studied in the great schools East and West, and became the most learned scholar of his day. "Of all the Latin fathers he was best qualified by genius, taste, and knowledge of Hebrew and Greek for this difficult task."[1] Bishop Westcott says,

[1]Schaff, Comp., 148.

"He alone for 1,500 years possessed the qualifications necessary for producing an original version of the Scriptures for the use of the Latin churches." Jerome says of himself, "My life almost from the cradle has been spent in the company of grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers."

His work may be best understood if we consider it in its historical order. His first effort was to revise and correct the Latin by comparing it with the Greek, seeking especially to remove the interpolations which had been introduced by scribes who thought in this way to improve it. In the Preface to the Gospels with which he began his revision he says, "If we are to glean the truth from a comparison of many, why not go back to the original Greek, and correct the mistakes introduced by inaccurate translators, and the blundering alterations of confident but ignorant critics, all that has been inserted or changed by copyists more asleep than awake?" How necessary he thought the work is seen from the remark, "If we pin our faith to the Latin texts, it is for our opponents to tell us *which*, for there are almost as many forms of texts as there are copies."

He began his revision of the Old Testament with the Psalms, producing what is now known as the Roman Psalter, and then proceeded to correct the other books by comparing them with the Greek text of the Septuagint. Only small portions of the Scriptures thus revised by him are now in existence, and many think he did not revise the entire Bible.

In this work he encountered two difficulties.

One was the complaints of those who saw in his version what they thought an impious attempt to change the Scriptures. In his preface to Job he says, "I am compelled at every step in my treatment of the books of Holy Scripture to reply to the abuse of my opponents. * * * Let those who will keep the old books with their gold and silver letters on purple skins, or, to follow the ordinary phrase, in uncial characters, loads of writing rather than manuscripts, if they only will leave for me and mine our poor pages and copies which are less remarkable for beauty than accuracy." It would seem there were those in his day who regarded any change as a giving up of the truth, even when that change was caused by an honest attempt to obtain a better translation of God's Word.

The other difficulty against which Jerome had to contend was that he was trying to secure a correct rendering of the Bible without going to the original Hebrew and Greek for it. He used only the Septuagint, and consequently found many places obscure which would have been plain if he had gone to the fountain head. He did not at that time understand Hebrew very well, and like all scholars of that day, had but a slight conception of its value. The book of Job is very hard to understand under the most favorable conditions, and in the Septuagint is very poorly translated, and when Jerome undertook to make a good Latin translation out of a very poor Greek one, he came near giving up in despair. In his preface to the book he says, "An indirectness and slipperiness attaches to the whole book, even in the Hebrew; and as orators in Greek say, it is tricked out with figures of speech, and while it says one thing it does another—just as if you close your hand to hold an eel, the more your squeeze it the sooner it escapes." Critics in all ages have found that when they attempted to squeeze the text, the more they squeeze the more effectually it slips away from them.

He spent several years in this attempt to prepare a good Latin translation, using only the Greek as the basis of his work. The result was a great improvement on the older and very corrupt copies of the Itala which had been in common use, but it did not meet the requirement of the times nor satisfy Jerome. Scholars were beginning to understand that no translation could be adequate or satisfy the earnest search after truth which was not made directly from the original.

Even before finishing his first effort Jerome had resolved on a second and more radical attempt to place an accurate copy of the Scriptures in the hands of the people. About 386 he became Abbot of a monastery at Bethlehem, Palestine, and there began a Latin translation directly from the Hebrew and Greek. This work when completed became an imperishable monument to his own learning, as well as a fountain from which the water of life should flow to millions of thirsty souls.

He first began to study Hebrew when he was forty-five years old. He tells the story in one of his letters:[1] "What labor I spent upon this task, what difficulties I went through,

[1] 125, 12.

how I despaired, how I gave over, and then in my eagerness to learn commenced anew, can be attested both by myself, the subject of this misery, and by those who lived with me. But I thank the Lord that from this seed of learning, sown in bitterness, I now cull sweet fruits." Once again do we catch a glimpse of the faithful old scholar, as amid the infirmities of old age he still pursues his studies. In the Preface to his Commentary on Ezekiel he says: "I am turning to profit, or rather stealing, the hours of the nights, which, now that winter is approaching, begin to lengthen somewhat, and endeavoring by the light of the lamp to dictate these comments, whatever they may be worth. In addition to this hindrance to my dictation, my eyes are growing dim with age, and to some extent I share the sufferings of the saintly Isaac. I am quite unable to go through the Hebrew books with such light as I have at night, for even in the full light of day they are hidden from my eyes owing to the smallness of the letters. In fact, it is only the voice of the brethren which enables me to master the commentaries of the Greek writers."

Every one who has tried to master the

Hebrew will sympathize with him in his trials, and the whole Christian world has reason to thank God for his perseverance, since to it we owe one of the best translations of the Bible.

Jerome completed this translation in 404, after having given fourteen years to the task, besides the many years in which he had been preparing himself for it. Beginning with some of the easier historical books, he worked his way slowly through the entire Bible.

His work is quite unequal in its merits. On some books he bestowed great labor. In his Preface to Samuel and Kings he speaks of his diligent translation and anxious emendation, and declares how earnestly he had striven not in the least to deviate from the Hebrew original. At other times he was less careful. He tells us that to the work of translating the three books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, he gave but three days, and those were days of recovery from a long illness, when he did not wish to be entirely silent and dumb. When translating the apochryphal books, whose inferiority he especially recognizes, he gave only one day to the book of Tobit, and that he calls a "day's hasty labor."

It could not be expected that a translation

so radically different from that in common use would be at once accepted without protest. He was accused of disturbing the peace of the Church. His changes were said to undermine the foundations of the faith. Even where they could not help admitting his version was correct and the old was wrong, many held it was better to allow the old error to remain than to provoke comparison by giving a correct translation. And this opposition was not confined to the common people. The great scholars, and some not so great, defended the old reading because it had become so familiar that it ought not to be disturbed. Even Augustine urges this in a letter to Jerome.[1]

To these unreasonable objections Jerome often responded in a way which reveals his fiery temper rather than his mature Christian character. In one place he speaks of the mad dogs who bark and rage against him and go about the city and think themselves learned if they disparage others. In the Preface to his Commentary on Jeremiah he speaks of one of his opponents as "the stupid fool, laboring under his load of Scotch porridge." Of

[1] Augustine's Letters, 82, 35.

Pelagius he says, "The devil who once spoke through Jovianus now barks through the hound of Albion, who is like a mountain of fat and whose fury is more in his heels than in his teeth." Another he calls a two-legged ass.

But all this controversy was but an incident in the history of this great work. Gradually its merits pushed it forward. In the fifth century it was officially adopted by the Church in Gaul. In the sixth century all scholars, except those of Africa, recognized the work of Jerome as being more truthful in substance and more perspicuous in language, and gradually, without any express official sanction, it was universally used in the Church, and finally, by the action of the Council of Trent, it became the standard of authority in the Roman Church.

It is not necessary to spend much time in tracing the history of this text of Jerome. It suffered the fate of all writings of the time. As it passed through the hands of incompetent scribes many errors were introduced. Many expressions were transferred from the older versions to take the place of Jerome's renderings which did not please the people. Fre-

quent attempts were made to arrest this evil. Even in the sixth century Cassiodorus did so. In 802 the Emperor Charlemagne entrusted the work of revision to Alcuin, a very learned Englishman, and his work contributed very materially to the restoration of Jerome's text. Again, in the eleventh century, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, made another attempt, and in the twelfth century the Pope tried it. But all such efforts were of little avail as long as the multiplication of copies depended on the pen. But when the art of printing from movable types was introduced, this at once revolutionized the method of preparing copies of the Scriptures. And it shows how God uses every advancing movement to build up his kingdom when we learn that the first book to issue from the press was the Latin Bible. This was probably in 1455. Other editions soon followed, but with great lack of accuracy.

At length, in 1590, Pope Sixtus V, after issuing an official copy of the Septuagint, sent forth what he intended should forever remain the standard edition of the Vulgate. He had the approval of the Council of Trent and the assistance of some of his best scholars, and above all, he was infallible. It was therefore

decreed that this edition must be received and held as true, without any doubt or controversy, in all public and private discussions, readings, preachings, and explanations. No one might publish any various readings. But alas! when it was issued it was found very defective, although proceeding from the infallible Pope.

The next Pope attempted to throw the responsibility for the mistakes on the printers, and another effort was made to fix a standard. In 1593, under Clement VIII, another edition was issued, which has remained the recognized authority in the Roman Church ever since. But it has many faults, which depend for their removal on a thorough revision of the text, a work of great difficulty, for which the time has not yet come.

In summing up our study we note a few facts tending to show the position and value of this great Latin version.

1. The Vulgate, even more than the Septuagint, is to be studied as a growth. It had its origin among the people who used the barbarous dialects of Northern Africa. When introduced into Italy it passed through many changes and revisions calculated to make it more acceptable to the better educated classes

among whom it was used. After its revision by Jerome, on the basis of the Septuagint, he went still farther and brought it to the searching test of conformity to the original Hebrew and Greek. Thus for two hundred and fifty years it was growing into its present form. It is therefore a treasury within which many scholars from many lands, through many generations, have concentrated their best efforts.

2. The Vulgate has had a very profound influence upon the religious thought and phraseology of the Christian world. For a thousand years it was the one book which circulated everywhere throughout the Western Church, and when the great Reformation came its peculiar forms of expression found their way into the modern translations which have molded the thought and life of the Protestant world. It is the connecting link between the original and the modern languages. Jerome, who put it into its final form, is called by Erasmus "The Christian Cicero." He first introduced those terms which have passed into all the languages of modern Christendom. We note such words as justification, regeneration, mediator, revelation, which are first

found in the Vulgate, and such words as election, inspiration, Scripture, which are in the Vulgate made to express thoughts never centering in them before. It will thus be seen that from the Vulgate very many of the most characteristic terms in theology have come to us. It was the right understanding of these and similar terms which roused the spiritual life of men like Luther and his companions to such profound convictions as to the truth.

It is to be noted also that Jerome was a very logical man, always seeking to give literally the force of the original. In this he differed widely from the great scholars of the Eastern Church. He made it one of the cardinal laws of his translation to find the literal, grammatical sense, and although he often forgets his own rule, he generally keeps in very close touch with it. And this principle has passed through his version into all modern translations, and made a profound impression upon the religious thought of the Western Church.

3. The Vulgate is valuable also in questions relating to textual criticism. It is true its value here is greatly lessened at present by the corrupt state of the text, which makes it danger-

ous to appeal to its authority. But with all its present defects it has much value.

Its early origin makes its testimony as to the text almost as strong as that of those early manuscripts on which we place so much confidence. Buhl[1] says, "The Western Church owed it to Jerome that it learned to know the Old Testament in a form which, upon the whole, was much purer and clearer than the Septuagint or the Latin Bible translations that were dependent upon it." H. P. Smith says,[2] "For a really critical text [of the Scriptures] the Vulgate is an indispensable necessity."

But when we pass from these general features to the finer questions of textual, verbal criticism, we find the value of the Vulgate growing less. Jerome was a learned man for his day, but he had almost nothing of what constitutes the literary outfit of the modern textual critic. The student of the Hebrew and Greek languages had then no such helps as our modern grammar and lexicon; he knew very little of the aid to be derived from a comparison of their forms with those found in

[1]Canon, 159.
[2]Pres. and Ref. Rev. II, 234.

cognate dialects. Even the geography of Bible lands and the customs of the people were not understood as they are to-day. We cannot, then, for a moment subscribe to the dictum of the Roman Catholic Church, that the work of Jerome is final and must be accepted as equal to the original in authority. We can and do look upon it as one of the most precious monuments of Latin Christianity, and we praise God that such a lighthouse was built to guide us in passing from those forms of civilization which prevailed in the Old World to those newer forms which characterize our own time. But we must remember still, it is only an imperfect rendering of the Divine Word, and we still have need of the profoundest scholarship and the most reverent love for that Word if we would receive from it the fullness of the truth which God has stored within it.

The Gothic Translation

The Gothic Translation

We have seen how God prepared the way for His Word among those who used the Latin and Greek languages. Through them all those nations coming under the influence of the Latin and Greek civilization could read His Word in their own tongue. But all over the north and west of Europe were tribes or nations, more or less allied in language and almost innumerable in number, who knew nothing of these great languages, but needed the Gospel as much as those of a higher intellectual training.

The general term which includes all these tribes is Gothic, and they are more or less directly the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxon, German, Hollandish, Flemish, Norse, Swedish, Danish, and Icelandish nations, as well as of the more composite nation known as the English.[1]

In their nature they were like the countries

[1]Marsh, 41.

they inhabited. Fierce and warlike in spirit, possessed of great physical strength, and capable of enduring great hardship, they had an immense advantage over their Southern neighbors, with whom they came into frequent collision. From their home along the Danube they sent marauding parties through the more fertile regions south of them, and such was the fierceness of their assault and the countless numbers in their armies, that the very word Goth became a synonym for everything savage and resistless. Wherever they went they appropriated whatever pleased them, and ruthlessly destroyed what they could not carry away.

But if they were more than a match for their Southern neighbors in physical strength and numbers, they could not resist the influence of the Gospel as exerted by the people over whom they gained such an easy triumph. As in so many cases, those who conquered with the sword were in turn conquered by the Gospel. They who had delighted in blood and conquest, who had for their deities the fierce Wodin and Thor, saw in the peaceful Jesus a God more worthy of their loving service.

The story of the conversion of these wild

tribes, and of the translation of the Bible into their language is one of absorbing interest. At present we must confine ourselves to the latter, and this is so intimately connected with the life of the man who made it that we cannot well separate them. His name was Ulfilas, or Ulphilas, which is equivalent to the German Wolfelein, or the Little Wolf. According to the latest research he was born in the year 311 A.D. One tradition tells us he was the son of a local chieftain.[1] Philostorgius, a writer of the fifth century, and a native of Cappadocia, says he belonged to a Cappadocian family which had accepted Christianity, and about 267 A.D. was carried into captivity by the Goths, who had made an invasion into that region. This seems the probable truth.[2]

At all events he was born among the Goths, and remained among them until he was seventeen years old, being much influenced by his heathen surroundings, we may well suppose, but having some knowledge of the Christian faith. In 328 the Roman Emperor Constantine gained a great victory over the Goths, and according to the custom of the times, took

[1] Andover Review, XVIII, 166.
[2] Muller, I, 184.

from them a number of hostages, young men, as pledges of the fidelity of their nation to him. The seat of the Roman empire under Constantine was Constantinople, and thither Ulfilas was brought, and there he remained for thirteen years. To a young man like Ulfilas, possessed of a strong intellect and a heart full of youthful enthusiasm, that new life would seem like a new world. Everything was different from what he had known in his home on the Danube, surrounded by the rude fierceness of his heathen companions. For Constantinople was not only the seat of the Roman empire, but the center of the Christian world as well. Under Constantine the political power became the handmaid of religion. Ulfilas there saw some of the most beautiful buildings ever constructed by human hands, consecrated to the service of the Christian religion. He found art, and music, and eloquence, and wealth, and honor uniting to add to the charm and the grandeur of worship.

The consequence can be easily anticipated. The young heathen was charmed by the new influences. He became a student of the Book which inspired such a powerful system. He accepted the Gospel and became a Christian.

With the true spirit of a convert, he began at once to preach his new-found faith to his Gothic countrymen living in the Roman capital. The Emperor set apart one of the churches for his use, and for seven years he served as lector, or teacher, of the Goths. Theodoret speaks of the "fascination of his eloquence."[1]

When he was thirty years of age he was consecrated as bishop at a Synod over which Eusebius of Nicomedia was leader, and was assigned to the Goths as his field of labor. He began at once to labor among his people.[2] For seven years he lived on the north of the Danube, in what is now known as Roumania. His work here seems to have been greatly blessed, but to have aroused the opposition of those of his people who would not accept the new teachings. Sozomen[3] tells how he exposed himself to innumerable perils in defense of the faith, so that the Goths placed the most implicit faith in him, and when the Huns swept down upon them from the north they fled, under his leadership, into Thrace and the surrounding country, the region now known as

[1]Eccl. History, IV, 33.
[2]Andover Rev., XVIII, 169.
[3]Eccl. Hist., VI, 37.

Bulgaria, and westward toward Germany and northern Italy. The Roman Emperor having given his consent to their occupation of this region, Ulfilas continued his work as a Christian bishop for thirty-three years, thus giving in all forty years to the arduous work of preaching the Gospel among his people.

During this period the Arian controversy was agitating the Church. Ulfilas himself cared little for the issue,[1] but for the sake of peace he accepted the Arian doctrine. Others, however, reach a different conclusion. In 380 the Emperor, hoping to quell the bitter strife, called a council at Constantinople. Ulfilas, now seventy years old and feeble from his long service and great hardships, started for the imperial city. Scarcely had he finished the journey when he was taken sick, and in the closing days of the year 380, or early in 381, he finished his warfare. His death for a time stilled the discord of contending factions, as they thought of his apostolic zeal and his pre-eminent service for his countrymen. In that grandest of cities, with all the splendor of a magnificent ritual, attended by the Emperor and the assembled bishops, the aged mission-

[1]Soz., VI, 37. Soc., II, 41. Theod., IV, 33.

ary was buried. Few men in the long and honorable roll of Christian heroes which adorns the history of the Church deserve a more kindly remembrance than Ulfilas, Bishop of the Goths.

But the position of Ulfilas is not due to his personal character or his missionary zeal, grand as they are, and productive of good in which all Europe rejoices to this day. He is known as the Christian scholar, and especially as the translator of the Bible into the Gothic language.

His position as a scholar well qualified him for this work of translation. Although seventeen years old when he left his home on the north of the Danube, we find him gaining such a mastery of both Greek and Latin that he could preach in them as fluently as in his own native tongue.[1] His knowledge of Gothic was such that his translation was used in the Christian work done among all the numerous clans composing the Gothic people, and when they began to spread out over Italy and Spain, and founded those great Gothic empires of Western Europe, this Gothic Bible went everywhere with them, and remained their one translation until their power was broken.[2]

[1] Encyc. Brit., XXIII, 719.
[2] Muller, I, 187.

Tregelles says, "It was at one time the vernacular translation of a large part of Europe."[1]

According to Socrates,[2] he had first to invent an alphabet before he could write out his translation, being in this respect the pioneer of many a modern missionary to a barbarous people. By combining the ancient Greek and Roman letters with the old Runic characters used among his own people, he devised a system of letters adapted to his work. It seems more likely, however, that the real work of Ulfilas was that of making available what may have already existed in a very rudimentary form.[3] The old Runic symbols were wholly inadequate for such a work as translating the Bible, and Ulfilas had the genius to devise a system which was adequate, a task as great oftentimes as that of original invention. But even if, with Sozomen, we use the softer expression, and say he taught his people the use of letters, his work still reveals the keen intellect as well as the resolute will and the strong faith in the future of his people, which inspired him.[4]

[1]Smith's Bible Dic., 3377.
[2]Eccl. Hist., IV, 33.
[3]Horne, II, 277.
[4]Marsh, 90.

In the Old Testament his translation is based on the Greek of the Septuagint, and in the New Testament on the original Greek in which it was first written. Made thus in the fourth century it is a valuable guide to the Greek text of the Septuagint, and being at least as old, if not indeed nearly a century older than the oldest Greek manuscript we now possess, it furnishes much assistance in determining the true text of the original copies of the New Testament books.[1]

It is generally conceded that his translation covered the entire Bible, although much of it is not now known to exist.[2] Westcott[3] thinks the Epistle to the Hebrews was not included in it, and an old tradition says he omitted the Books of Kings because he feared their warlike spirit would stir up the passion for war among his people. But as fragments of the very stimulating Book of Nehemiah have been found, it seems very improbable that a man so courageous as Ulfilas would shrink from publishing a part of the Scriptures through any such fear. At present large portions of the Gospels, nearly all of Paul's Epistles, and

[1]Smith's Bible Dic., 3378.
[2]And. Rev. XVIII. 169.
[3]Ep. Heb., XXVI.

parts of Esther and Nehemiah, have been recovered and published. When the old Gothic civilization and power yielded to the new spirit which has so revolutionized Europe, the language shared in the destruction. So utter was its overthrow that it was once thought all written remains of the language had perished, but more careful research has brought to light these fragments.

By far the most interesting of these fragments is the manuscript of the Gospel known as the Codex Argenteus. It is written on a beautiful purple-tinted vellum, the letters being faced with silver, except the first letter of the sections and some prominent passages which are faced with gold. Its perfection of finish and style of lettering have led some to think the work must have been done with some sort of type, although the art of printing came eight hundred years afterward. At present only 188 of its original 320 leaves are known to exist.

This Codex Argenteus has a history whose romantic interest surpasses almost everything else in literature. It is thought to have been prepared not more than one hundred and fifty years after Ulfilas died, about 530 A.D.[1]

[1]Marsh, 91.

When the Goths migrated westward this manuscript was brought from its old home on the lower Danube, and all trace of it disappears for about one thousand years. But in the sixteenth century (1563) Conrad Gesner, a bookworm rummaging among the old manuscripts in the Monastery of Werden, Westphalia, found it and copied from it the Lord's Prayer as a literary curiosity. Again it disappeared, no one knows how, and was not seen again till in 1648, when, at the close of the Thirty Years' War, the Swedish army sent home some of the plunder they had taken in the capture of the city of Prague in Bohemia. Among these treasures was the Codex Argenteus. A few years later, when Queen Christina abdicated, search was made for it, and again it was gone, no one knew where. In 1665, nearly twenty years after it came to Sweden, it was discovered in Holland, among the treasures of Isaac Vossius, who had been the Queen's librarian. How he came by it is one of the unsolved mysteries. Some have said the Queen, out of regard for her old servant, gave it to him. Others think that the Swedish general, who brought the plunder from Prague, allowed his old friend, the librarian,

to keep this as a memento of his triumph, the man of the sword not valuing very highly what the man of the quill thought worth more than all else. But if Vossius had not been a Hollander, and so above any such suspicion, we might perhaps think that the old scholar, knowing the true value of the rusty-looking document, had quietly slipped it into his own pocket, instead of depositing it on the shelves of the royal library.[1]

At all events there was the Codex Argenteus in the possession of Vossius, and the Swedish Government was exceedingly anxious to regain the precious document. So a Swedish nobleman, Count Magnus de la Gardie by name, was sent to Holland to get it. He did so by paying Vossius six hundred dollars. On its restoration to Sweden it was magnificently bound in silver and deposited in the library of the University of Upsala, where it remains to this day, one of its most valuable documents. But the romance is not yet ended. In 1854 the Swedish scholar Uppstrom wished to issue a critical edition of it for the benefit of scholars, and behold, ten leaves were missing. No one knew when or how they had

[1] Bib. Sacra, XVI, 443.

disappeared. Suspicion fell upon an Englishman, but a few years later the real thief was found to be a Swede, who on his death-bed confessed he had the missing leaves. It is now safely guarded as one of the choicest literary treasures of Sweden, in a steel safe, in a fireproof room in the library of the University of Upsala.

In 1672 in the library at Wolfenbuttel, Germany, a fragment of the Gothic translation of the Epistle to the Romans was discovered. In 1817, in the library at Milan, northern Italy, Cardinal Mai, when trying to decipher some old palimpsest manuscripts, discovered some Gothic letters which proved to be parts of Ezra and Nehemiah. Further study brought to light other portions of the Old Testament and a complete copy of the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul. Thus the most important parts of the work of Ulfilas, after being scattered over Europe for nearly fourteen centuries, were again reunited.[1]

This Gothic version stands forever as a moument to the devout scholarship of the man who made it. Between the rude life of his childhood and the undeveloped resources of

[1]Smith's Bible Dic., 3378.

his native language and this highly finished, and in many cases felicitously rendered translation, there is a chasm over which few men would have been bold enough to attempt a passage. But with almost unparalleled labor "he compelled that sanguinary language to repeat the Psalms of David, the parables of the Evangelists, and the theology of Paul."[1] He thus almost literally created a language into which he translated the Bible which for nearly five hundred years was used by a large part of Europe.[2] Such work could be done by no ordinary man, and that Ulfilas should thus consecrate his talents to the dissemination of God's Word as the best work he could do for humanity, shows how truly he had caught the spirit of the Master.

This version has also a literary value which is very great. It is by far the oldest existing monument of any Teutonic language.[3] It is seven centuries older than the Edda of the Scandinavians; five centuries older than the Nibelungen-lied of Germany; three centuries older than the poem of Cædmon, which

[1]Quoted in And. Rev., XVIII, 168.
[2]Whitney, 213,
[3]Schaff-Herzog, 2416.

marks the beginning of English poetry.[1] Whitney[2] says, "Scanty as these relics may be, they are of inestimable value in illustrating the history of the whole Germanic branch of Indo-European language, and bridging over the distance which separates it from other branches." Marsh[3] says, "In accidence and vocabulary the Mæso-Gothic of Ulfilas is purer and more unsophisticated than any other philological monument of European literature." Grimm[4] says, "But for his incomparable work the foundations of the German language would have been lost; nor can we easily estimate the greatness of our loss in the large portions of the Gothic Bible which have disappeared." It is a fountain whose waters have found their way into all the more powerful languages of modern Europe.

This version has also its value in the study of Biblical criticism. Its early origin introduces us to the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament as they existed at a very early period. It shows a careful knowledge of Greek grammar, and by its close following of the original

[1] And. Rev., XVIII, 169.
[2] 213.
[3] Lit., 91.
[4] And. Rev., XVIII., 169.

enables us to see clearly the condition of the text he used. It is well known that Ulfilas himself accepted a modified form of the Arian teachings which were then agitating the Church. But those who have carefully examined his translation declare that his doctrinal belief has not perceptibly colored his translation.

When we consider the numerous peoples which have sprung more or less directly from that old Gothic stock, and the prominent place they have filled in the development of modern Europe and America, we can see what reason we have for thankfulness that in that critical period when our ancestors were breaking away from their idolatry and giving up their savage life, God raised up a man like Ulfilas, whose love for God and his countrymen and his zeal for their welfare led him to translate the Bible that it might be their guide in all their wanderings and teach them the true secret of a well ordered life.

The German Translation

The German Translation

For nearly one thousand years after Ulfilas gave his translation to the Goths no further effort was made to adapt the language of the Bible to the wants of the common people. In the East the Greek version and in the West the Latin satisfied scholars, and were used in public worship. Not until new conditions of society arose, and the people refused any longer to remain satisfied with the repetition of words which had no meaning to them, was any serious effort made to provide a translation of the Scriptures which all could study for themselves.

Two influences combined to keep the people ignorant of the true teachings of the Scriptures:

1. The difficulty of providing copies of it in sufficient numbers to supply so great a demand. Before the invention of printing the work of making a copy of the Bible was both slow and expensive, so that only people of great wealth could afford to have it as a private possession.

2. But a far more powerful reason was the unwillingness of the Roman Catholic Church to allow the people to read the Bible for themselves. Their constant cry was that the common people cannot understand the Scriptures, except as the Church explains it to them. The prohibition of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, put forth at the Council of Toulouse in 1229, and repeated by other councils in various parts of the Church, was but the expression of a sentiment which had been long growing among the Roman Catholic priests, who frowned upon, and as far as they could, prevented anything like Bible study among the people.

The earliest attempts to furnish a popular translation for modern Europe are involved in great obscurity. Some try to find a beginning as early as the reign of Charlemagne (742-814), or his son Louis, but there is slender foundation for such an opinion. The fact is every great modern translation is a growth. At first there is an attempt to set forth the substance of the more popular parts of the Bible in such a manner as to attract the popular mind and heart. These earliest efforts are generally poetical in form and make no claim to any-

thing like a literal translation. Thus we find in the ninth century (about 860) a rhymed harmony of the Gospels, in High German, interspersed with mystical reflections, which is now known under the name of Krist, written by Otfried of Weissenburg, in lower Alsace.[1] In this the beautiful story of our Savior's life is set forth with all the embellishments of tradition and mysticism, as well as with all the graces of poetry. About the same time appeared a Low Saxon harmony of the Gospels in alliterative verse, so as to be more easily committed to memory by those who could not read, and which breathes the same warlike spirit as prevails among their descendants to this day. To the same period belongs a prose translation of the Gospel Harmony of Tatian, based on a Latin translation made by Victor of Capua.[2]

In the tenth century (about 980) Notker Labeo, abbot of St. Gall, made a translation of the Psalms. About a century later Williram, or Willeram, an abbot of Mersburg, made a metrical paraphrase of the Song of Solomon in Latin, accompanied by one in prose in Ger-

[1] Reuss, 479.
[2] Encyc. Brit., 3, 647.

man, in which the mystic ideas as to the meaning of that book are set forth. Somewhat later we find a metrical version of Genesis and some other parts of the Bible.. Of these the authorship is largely unknown, and the work very imperfectly done, but they had a great influence in arousing the people to independent thought.[1]

In the twelfth century the work of translation begins to assume a more practical turn. Metrical translations of Genesis and other books are produced, and these are followed by renderings in prose. They are generally the work of some individual, who, according to his knowledge or his fancy, has made his work a reasonably close rendering of the Vulgate, and adorned it with such illustrations and explanations as the subject seemed to him to demand or his learning could supply. In the Imperial Library at Vienna there is a quarto manuscript containing fragments of both the Old and New Testaments in the Old German tongue, chiefly in verse, and written as early as 1210 A.D. In the same library is a magnificent copy of the Old Testament, executed about 1400 for the King of Bohemia, richly

[1]Townley, I, 293. Reuss, 480.

illuminated, and showing the fine attainments of the copyist.[1]

A feature of this period was the production of "Historical Bibles." These are translations of such portions of the Bible as contain the narratives which tell the story of God's wonderful dealings with his people, but omit the didactic parts; the idea being that the people could understand that which tells in an objective way the story of God's love and care, but the rest was beyond their grasp.

The first complete translation of the Bible into the Middle High German was made in the beginning of the fourteenth century.[2] Its origin is unknown, the attempt to prove its Waldensian origin not being established.[3] Compared with that noble translation which the German people have to-day, it was a very poor version. It came not from the original fountain of Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, but from the Latin, which was itself very imperfect, but it was infinitely better than the senseless mutterings of the priests in a language of which the people knew nothing, and often the priests not much more. It was at

[1] Townley, I, 354, 526.
[2] Reuss, 480.
[3] Pres. Rev., VIII, 355.

least in their own language, and it was a prophecy of something better yet to come. If the rude paraphrases which preceded this translation marked the dawn of a better day, this told them how the day was marching on, so that already the sun itself began to be visible in the eastern sky.

The invention of printing in 1462 gave an immediate impetus to the work of translation, and made it possible to circulate it freely among the people. Almost the first book to be published was the Bible, and between the invention of printing and 1522, when Luther's New Testament first appeared, seventeen or eighteen editions of this first German translation were published, fourteen editions in the High German, and the others in Low German. Besides these editions of the complete Bible, very many special books, like the Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles, were issued. These circulated everywhere among the people, and were among the most important agencies in preparing the way for the great Reformation.[1]

These repeated efforts to furnish a translation of the Bible which could be read by the masses of the German people naturally at-

[1]Schaff, Hist. of the Chr. Church, VI, 343.

tracted the attention of the Roman Church. Council after council uttered its fulminations against those who would dare to possess or read a German Bible. In 1486 the Archbishop of Mainz issued a decree forbidding the printing of the German Bible, and calling upon all who possessed one to deliver it to the priests that it might be publicly destroyed, giving as his reason that the noble Greek and Latin languages could not be conveyed through the rude medium of German words, and that the laity could not understand the Scriptures except when duly explained by the priest. But it was now too late. The people having tasted the good Word of God in their own familiar language, would no longer chew the tasteless cud of a foreign language, repeated by a man who did not himself understand the meaning of the words he uttered.

All the conditions of education and of religious thought in Germany were now favorable to an advance in the work of Bible translation. Grave questions of doctrine and duty arose, for the solution of which that rude German translation from an imperfect Latin version could not be depended upon. Greek scholars, like Erasmus and Melancthon, and

Hebrew scholars who investigated the original found how defective that Latin version was, and pointed out how much more satisfactory a correct rendering of the original would be. The time had now come when Germany needed a thorough translation from the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and as usual, God had the man ready to do it.

That man was Martin Luther. Educated for the Roman priesthood, he was led to a careful study of the Scriptures, and as the light dawned upon his own soul, he felt that the great need of his countrymen was such a knowledge of God's Word as could be found only by a careful study of it in their own language. It was not long before the bold utterance of his convictions led to that conflict with his church which resulted in his being taken by the Elector Frederick of Saxony for protection to the fortified castle of the Wartburg, above Eisenach, one of the finest portions of the Thuringian forest.

The hand of God was in this, for in the enforced leisure which followed Luther gave his thoughts to a translation of the Bible suitable for the spiritual edification of his people. On the twenty-first of September, 1522, he issued

the New Testament, and twelve years later the entire Bible, including the Apochrypha, was published at Wittenberg by Hans Lufft.

To this translation Luther devoted his best energies. Although he had few of those literary appliances now thought essential for critical study, he made a special study of the Greek and Hebrew that he might enter into the spirit of the original. His supreme thought was to reproduce the spirit of the text, and he did not hesitate to change the form if by so doing he might be more sure of reaching the German mind.

The text from which he translated the New Testament was that of the fourth edition of Erasmus,[1] or according to Schaff,[2] the second, published in 1519, both of which contain many errors. The Hebrew Bible used by him was one printed in Brescia, Italy, in 1494. Neither of these texts would now be considered suitable for such a purpose.

In translating the New Testament Luther worked alone and with great care, some portions of his manuscript, which is still preserved, showing at least fifteen revisions before

[1]Encyc. Brit., XVI, 75.
[2]Comp. to the New Test., 231.

he submitted it to the press. When he issued the second edition, only three months after the first, he received some suggestions from Erasmus.[1] But when he came to the Old Testament he found the Hebrew a very stubborn language, and was glad to call on his friends for assistance. In a letter to one of his friends, Wenceslaus Lincus, he says, "How difficult and laborious the task, to force the Hebrew writers to speak German, which they resist, like the nightingale refusing to quit its delightful melody to imitate the coarse notes of the monotonous cuckoo."[2]

To secure greater efficiency he had a weekly gathering of his most highly educated friends at his house, which Matthesius calls a private Sanhedrim, but which Luther calls "Collegium Biblicum." To these meetings came, among others, Melancthon with his Greek, Cruciger with his Hebrew and Chaldee, Bugenhagen with his Latin, and Jewish rabbis full of rabbinical lore. Over them was Luther himself, with a copy of the Hebrew and Greek Bible, and the manuscript of his own translation for their inspection. When they encountered

[1] Encyc. Brit., XV, 76.
[2] Townley, II, 10.

passages requiring special knowledge he called in men celebrated in that line. Thus when translating the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Revelation, with its long catalogue of precious stones, he sent for Spalatin, the keeper of the royal jewels, who brought some of the rarest gems for their inspection. When engaged on Leviticus, with its minute details in regard to sacrifices, he sent for a butcher, and had him dissect an animal before him and explain the name of each part.[1] Sometimes they hunted two weeks for a single word, and often a passage of three lines would consume four or five sittings. His aim was to make a translation which could be understood by the mother in the house, by the children in the streets, and by the laborer in the market. He tells us that in order to find the most appropriate word he was accustomed to look men everywhere in the mouth that he might learn how they expressed themselves. His own genius for music and poetry especially fitted him for translating the poetical books, in which he found great delight.

But Luther had other qualifications even more essential than learning. He had a spirit-

[1] Encyc. Brit., XV, 76.

ual nature all aglow with the truth he sought to translate. His own profound conviction of the truthfulness and importance of the Bible entered into and became a constituent part of his work. His translation is full of life, impassioned in expression, because it comes from a soul itself on fire with the truth. His own poetical and musical nature finds expression in language which is the very soul of poetry and music. He does not translate merely to satisfy a craving for the truth, he does not think merely of the beauty of the thoughts he seeks to express, but always he stands face to face with the spiritual; he is in the presence of God; he hears the voice of the Almighty speaking to him; he sees before him the man of Galilee whose words are full of a Divine spirit which at once charms and captivates his heart. It is this exquisite harmony between Luther and the truth he sought to express which constitutes the supreme excellence of his translation. Luther himself says, "A good translation requires a truly devout, faithful, diligent, Christian, learned, experienced, and practical heart." In him all these endowments meet as they have never done in any other man who has given himself to the translation of the Bible.

The work of Luther was instantly accepted by the German people. Within three months after the New Testament was issued a second edition was necessary, and before the Old Testament was finished seventeen editions of the New had been published under the supervision of Luther, and more than fifty reprints by others. He continued to revise and modify the text, seeking greater simplicity, until in 1545, one year before his death, he issued what has become the standard edition.[1] With a few unimportant verbal changes this translation has continued in general use until the present day.

Many attempts have been made to modify or supplant it. In 1667 Hildebrand von Canstein, founder of the great Bible house, began a rescension, which was continued until 1719. "It acquired a large circulation, and became the textus receptus of the German Bible."[2] In 1828 the Bible Society at Strasburg issued a New Testament with some changes suggested in the margin, but the work was never completed. In 1838 De Wette prepared a new translation, which has great

[1] Reuss, 489.
[2] Schaff, Hist. of the Chr. Ch., VI, 349.

literary merit. In 1882 Weizsäcker issued a New Testament which has gone through several editions, in which he attempts, with great success, to present the Greek thought in the popular language of the day, without giving a literal translation. Still more recently Kautzsch has done the same for the Old Testament, embodying the latest results of scholarship in many tables, charts, and maps, forming one of the most learned translations ever made. Weizsäcker and Kautzsch are bound together. But none of these has attained any prominence in the religious life of Germany, or in any way interfered with the increasing usefulness of Luther's work.

In 1857 the need of a uniform text became so manifest that at the suggestion of the German Evangelical Church Congress, the Canstein Bible Society undertook to prepare a "Revised Edition." It was understood that the changes were to be limited to such as had become absolutely necessary, and that these should be made in harmony with the diction of Luther's own work. A large number of the leading theological professors in the German universities were engaged in the work of revision. In 1870 the New Testament was ready for distribu-

tion, and in 1883 the so-called "Probebibel" appeared. This was again subject to revision, and in 1890 went into general circulation. This revision was made with very great care, and is very conservative, only about two hundred changes being made in the New Testament, and these are confined to the correction of acknowledged mistranslations. The New Testament has met with considerable approval and is widely circulated. But as a whole the Probebibel has found almost no favor among the masses of the German people.[1]

It would be easy to point out defects in this great work. Luther was not a profound scholar in the modern sense of the word, and the strong searchlight of critical investigation had not yet been thrown upon the sacred text. It is essentially a product of the times, and has the character of the man who made it. In his desire to be understood he sometimes introduces words which smell of the gutter, when others might have been found which would express the idea as clearly. That he did not always have a clear idea of the meaning of the text may be freely admitted. His ultra Protestantism may be traced in such words as

[1]Schaff, Hist. Chr. Ch., VI, 366.

"nur" in Rom., iv. 15, and "allein" in Rom., iii. 28. Such blemishes are but motes in the sunbeam, and as we exult in the beauty and fullness of the truth shining forth from its pages, we may well pass them in silence as we emerge into the glorious light shining around us. It has exerted a wholesome and vivifying influence in every department of German life.

In one sense it may be said to have created the modern German language. Before this every tribe and state had its own dialect, and the people of one section could scarcely understand those from another part of the country. He chose the Franconian, or Saxon dialect, used in the court and state documents, and then enriched it by contributions from every department of German learning. He thus made himself understood by all classes, whether they used the High or Low German, and his Bible is still the standard of the German tongue, and has preserved unity of language and literature to the German nation.[1] Reuss[2] says, "Its language, happily rising out of Old German harshness, the best Luther wrote, and surpassed by none of his contemporaries,

[1] Prof. Lindsay, in En. Brit., XV, 76.
[2] 490.

sounded like a prophecy of a golden age of literature, and in manly vigor and anointing of the Holy Spirit it has ever remained a model unapproached." An English historian by no means partial to Luther's religious work says his translation of the Bible is "the greatest of all the gifts he was able to offer to Germany." The Encyclopædia Britannica, X, 528, says: "For the first time it gave the nation a literary language. * * * It is thus to Luther that the Germans owe the most essential of all conditions of a truly national life and literature." Dollinger, speaking of Luther, says: "It was Luther's supreme intellectual ability and wonderful versatility that made him the man of his age and of his nation. * * * He has given more to his nation than any other one man has ever done—language, popular education, the Bible, sacred song. * * * It was he who put a stamp upon the German language as well as upon the German character. And even those Germans who heartily abhor him as a great heretic and betrayer of religion cannot help speaking his words and thinking his thoughts."

The effect of Luther's translation on the Roman Church forms an interesting study.

They saw at once that it would be a more powerful adversary to their cause than even Luther himself, and they hated the book more than the man who made it. As soon as it appeared it was violently assailed by the Roman clergy. Dr. Emser, one of their ablest and fairest critics, pointed our fourteen hundred heresies and falsehoods in the New Testament alone.[1] It was to them a very serious and fatal objection that Luther translated directly from the Greek and Hebrew, instead of from the Latin, which they exalted above the original. The whole tone of the work, its bold antagonism to every claim of the Catholic Church, its underlying assumption of the right of individual freedom in the study of the Scriptures, were so diametrically opposed to their position that they saw it must be crushed or it would crush them. It was a challenge to battle which they could not decline without an open acknowledgment of defeat.

This led to a course of action without precedent in the Roman Church. They determined to prepare a German translation which should serve as an antidote to that of Luther. Within five years after Luther's New Testament

[1] Townley, II, 20.

appeared Emser issued what he calls "A correct translation of the New Testament." But he made the fatal mistake of using the Latin as the basis of his work instead of the original Greek. Its purpose was so evidently to weaken the influence of Luther, rather than to furnish a correct translation of the Word of God, that its power for good was destroyed. Except upon the points at issue it was little more than a reproduction of Luther's translation, so that Luther said of it, "He has left out my preface, inserted one of his own, and then sold my translation almost word for word." Reuss[1] says of it, "It is Luther's translation revised according to the Vulgate." In 1534 the entire Bible was issued in German, and in 1537 the famous Dr. Eck prepared a second translation, but neither of them could counteract the ever-increasing influence of Luther.

Luther's translation has also exerted a powerful influence on all the great translations of modern Europe. In Switzerland it was accepted, with slight modifications, and continues to this day the national Bible. In England it aroused a spirit of investigation which has produced our noble English version, and left

[1] 1479.

its impress on many a well-known passage. In Holland it prepared the way for a version which has no superior in its fidelity to the original. In France it became a beacon light to the struggling Protestants, and taught them how to prepare the Scriptures for the use of the people. All these, while they have their individual virtues, and reflect to some extent their national characteristics, have this in common that they follow Luther in using the purest forms of language and are pervaded by an intense spiritual earnestness.

The influence of Luther's translation upon the religious life and thought of the time is equally manifest. The great need of that period of theological perplexity was a standard to which all could appeal. The masses could not read the Hebrew and Greek, they had become suspicious of the Church and her traditions, they had lost confidence in the teachings of the priests. Into that disturbed, bewildered discontent came the translation of Luther, appealing to them not only by its simple language, but far more by its profound harmony with their own spiritual desires and longings, and at once it was welcomed by every one seeking for the truth. It was like the sudden

appearance of the pole star to the mariner after long tossing upon a tempestuous sea. It was as if the Bible had been written anew. It did not create the Reformation, but it was the pendulum which regulated that mighty movement. It was the one element necessary to give intelligence and success to an effort which began in a blind struggle to break from chains which could no longer be borne, and find the truth which alone could satisfy them. The spiritual Germany immediately felt its power. It drew them together so as to make the Reformation a more signal success in Germany than anywhere else on the Continent. Nor was its influence confined to that age. Says the Encyclopaedia Britannica:[1] "For three centuries it has been to innumerable millions the supreme sanctifier and councilor, the power associated with their tenderest, most pathetic memories, the one link which has connected sordid lives with noble and sublime ideas." Reuss[2] says: "However much in after times the Church was tossed to and fro on the troubled sea of opinions, Luther's Bible was still in the school and home, and was always the anchor that led it back again to solid

[1] X, 528.
[2] 484.

ground." Protestant Germany, and Protestant Europe as well, bear, and will always bear, the impress of Luther's spirit as reflected in his translation of the Bible. As long as that German nation continues to use Luther's Bible, and its simple and soul-inspiring language is incorporated into its literary and spiritual life, it cannot go fatally astray. Under disturbing influences and entangling speculations in philosophy and religion it may for a time waver and seem to forget, but as the magnetic needle, turned for a moment from its true course by some temporary attraction, will swing gradually back to its place when that disturbing element is removed, so will that nation swing back to its allegiance to Christ and feel again the exhilaration of a new life as it drinks from this open fountain of Divine truth.

The English Translation

The English Translation

When Augustine, or Austin, the Roman Catholic monk, went as a missionary to England, in 596 A.D., the Pope sent him a Bible, the Psalter, the Gospels, and several other books of a religious character.[1]

This Bible was the old Latin version out of which afterward grew the Vulgate, which is now used in all the services of the Roman Catholic Church. This Bible was in two volumes, one of which is said to be preserved in the Bodleian Library. This Latin text was used in the first efforts to produce the Anglo-Saxon version, which is the historical ancestor of our English Bible.[2]

Many traditions exist as to the early attempts to provide a version for the use of the English people.

The earliest on which any reliance can be placed is that of Cædmon, in 680. His

[1] Turner, I, 203.
[2] Bissel, 4.

romantic history, by the Venerable Bede, tells us his business was to look after the cattle belonging to the monastery of Whitby. In a dream he heard a voice saying to him, "Cædmon, sing some song to me." He pleaded his lack of poetical or musical ability, but when the command was repeated he said, "What shall I sing?" The answer came, "Sing of the beginning of created things." When his dream was related to the Abbess Hilda, she caused the Scripture narrative to be explained to him, and the next day he returned with a poetical rendering of great beauty. Bede tells us[1] he then sang of the creation of the world, of the origin of man, with many histories of the Holy Writ, the life of Christ, and many other Biblical topics.

But little of this work of Cædmon has been preserved, and that can hardly be called a translation; it is rather a poetical paraphrase in which the facts of Scripture are given, but adorned with many fancies which have no place in the Bible. Its chief interest lies in the fact that it is the first recorded effort to reproduce the Scripture in the vernacular.

About the close of the seventh century,

[1] IV, 24.

Guthlac of Croyland, having one of the Psalters brought from Rome, wrote in it an interlinear Saxon translation, which is still preserved in the British Museum; and not long after, about 706, Aldhelm made another Saxon translation of the Psalms, the first fifty of them in prose, the rest in poetical form.[1]

Another notable writer was Bede, since known as the Venerable Bede, because of his great work for the church. He wrote a history of the early English Church, and prepared commentaries on several books of the Bible. A tradition says he translated the entire Bible, but if he did so his work has perished. More credit may be given to the story of his translation of the Gospel of John, the last verse of which was finished on the day of his death.[2]

Alfred, one of the most celebrated of the Saxon kings, wrote a translation of the Ten Commandments, which he placed at the head of a code of laws which he prepared for his people, and was engaged in translating the Bible when he died.

Not long after Alfred's time we find a translation of the four Gospels, but of its exact date or of the persons who prepared it we have no

[1] Condit, 27.
[2] Bede, Introd., 18.

authentic information. And about the close of the tenth century Ælfric, a Saxon abbot, translated much of the Old Testament and some of the Apocrypha.

It is easy to see that all these early efforts were very crude and fragmentary. These early authors rendered only small portions of the Bible, but we find already in the time of Alfred and Ælfric a degree of fidelity to the original and a literary finish which entitle them to great respect. The Anglo-Saxon was then fixed in its character, and the fragments of Bible translation which yet remain furnish us with some of the best specimens of its beauty. These early renderings were all made from the Vulgate, but from the comparatively pure text which Augustine brought with him to England, so that in textual criticism they still have a recognized value, while as the beginning of the effort to secure an English Bible they must ever have a profound interest.

With the advent of William the Conqueror (1071) England was wholly transformed. The government was concentrated in one person, new elements of social life were introduced, commerce was wonderfully developed, and the intellectual life greatly quickened. Over the

church his power was rigidly enforced. "In a word, it is to the stern discipline of our foreign kings that we owe not merely English wealth and English freedom, but England herself."[1]

Not the least of these transformations was that of the language. The Anglo-Saxon simplicity was mingled with the Norman dignity, and our modern English arose, Saxon still with its intense heart power, but rounded into a richer fullness by the broader culture of the Norman.

Such a change made it necessary to prepare a new translation of the Scriptures for the people. For a century and a half there was great political disturbance, and not much that may be called literary development. But early in the thirteenth century, about 1225, we find a metrical paraphrase of those parts of the Gospels and Acts which were read in the daily services of the Church, accompanied by a commentary, written by Orm, or Ormin, which shows how the Norman and other influences were affecting the Saxon. A fragment of about 20,000 lines is preserved in the Bodleian Library, from which printed copies have been made. While it reflects the language of the

[1]Green, I, 125.

period, it did not exert much influence in the development of it. If we substitute modern spelling, it looks and sounds much like the English we use to-day.[1]

In the beginning of the next century we find what we may call the first literal translations. About 1327 William de Shoreham rendered the Psalms into prose, making a rendering which is remarkably strong and accurate, considering he had only the Latin text on which to base his work. Soon after Richard Rolle made another prose translation of the Psalms, accompanied with a comment on each verse. He also prepared metrical paraphrases of several passages in both the Old and New Testaments. As a specimen of this early work we give the opening sentences of Rolle's version of the twenty-third Psalm, as found in Mombert's Handbook of the Bible (35):

"Our lord gouerneth me and nothyng to me shal wante: stede of pasture that he me sette.

"In the water of hetyng forth he me broughte; my soul he turnyde. He ladde me on in the streetis of rygtwisnesse: for his name."

But the time had now arrived when the people of England demanded the whole Bible

[1]Moulton, 12.

in a more careful translation, and in response to this demand came the great work of John Wycliffe, which forms one of the most conspicuous landmarks in the history of our English Bible.

Wycliffe was born in 1324, in Yorkshire, studied at Oxford, was a teacher and preacher of great power, professor of theology at Oxford, rector of Lutterworth, where he remained until his death on the last day of the year 1384. He was a man of unusual learning, bold and aggressive in character. Early in life he began to oppose the ideas of religion as taught by the Roman Church, and his entire life was full of conflict. In 1379 he suffered from a stroke of paralysis, but recovered, only to be excommunicated for his persistent adherence to the truth. He saw that the greatest need of the time was a Bible which would reveal to the people the true way of life. The Roman Church taught that the Bible was intended for the clergy, a sort of manual for the conduct of worship, a book which did not specially concern the laity, and whose unrestricted circulation would be injurious rather than helpful. When Wycliffe published his translation they said it was casting pearls

before swine; by means of it the Gospel would be made vulgar and laid more open to the laity, and even to women.[1]

All such ideas added to Wycliffe's determination to translate the Scriptures. Details of the progress of the work cannot be given, since little is known in regard to it. It is generally agreed that the translation appeared about 1380. Wycliffe translated the entire New Testament, while in the Old he had the assistance of Nicholas de Hereford, a prominent scholar of the time, who translated from Gen. 1 to Baruch 3:20. In 1388 a revision of it was made by Richard Purvey, who wrote a lengthy prologue setting forth the care he had taken to make his work as complete as possible. This revision became, very justly, the recognized form under which the work of Wycliffe circulated.

In estimating the value of Wycliffe's work and its influence upon our English translation, several facts must be remembered. It was the first translation which covered the entire Bible. It was made when English scholarship was of a comparatively low standard. It was made from the Latin, and not from the origi-

[1] Condit, 62.

nal languages in which the Bible was written. It depended for its circulation upon manuscript copies. It had to face the combined efforts of the Roman Church for its destruction. Nevertheless it had a very extensive circulation. Different books were transcribed into little volumes, which became the pocket companions of those who loved the Word. In many places Wycliffe's rendering, after being discarded by later translators, was again restored by those who prepared our authorized text.

In style and vocabulary Wycliffe appealed directly to the people. Although his work circulated only in manuscript, and during the formative period of English literature, so much of it has proved of permanent value that he is justly considered the father of our Biblical phraseology, and his translation has exerted a powerful influence on that wider English literature which has done so much for the intellectual elevation of the English-speaking world. That it did not enter more visibly into the life of the succeeding generation is due not to its lack of value, but to the bitter persecution it endured, and to the fact that its circulation depended on the slow and expensive process of copying with the pen.

Many manuscripts remain to show the character of this first English Bible. The New Testament was published in 1731 by Rev. John Lewis, and it has been republished many times since. The entire Bible was published in 1850, under the editorship of Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederick Madden, in a critical edition in four volumes, with a glossary. As a specimen we give the following from Matt., 8:2, 3.[1]

"And loo! a leprouse man cummynge worshipide hym, sayinge; Lord, gif thou wolt, thou maist make me clene. And Jesus holdynge forthe the hond, touchide hym, sayinge, I wole; be thou maad clene."

The next forward movement brings us to the publication of the translation made by William Tyndale, about a century and a half after Wycliffe's work was completed. In the mean time the art of printing has been invented, a great intellectual revival has spread over Europe, a spirit of personal manhood has arisen in rebellion against the mental and spiritual shackles of the papacy, and the religious life of Christendom has been wonderfully stirred by the publication of the Greek and Latin New Testament of Erasmus.

In the midst of such influences William Tyn-

[1]Marsh, 346.

dale was born in 1484, in Gloucestershire. He studied first at Oxford and then at Cambridge. At the latter place he came in contact with the New Testament of Erasmus. In a quiet way he began to expound the Scriptures, and this soon impressed him with the fact that nothing could be done successfully for the spiritual elevation of the people unless "The Scriptures were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text."[1]

After leaving Cambridge we find him as tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, and afterward in London, where he seems to have begun his translation of the New Testament. Then he goes in 1524 to Hamburg, where he had the help of an unknown friend, perhaps John Fryth the Martyr, and later of William Roy. While here he probably finished his translation of Matthew and Mark. In April, 1525, we find him in Cologne, with Royce, where he arranged with Peter Quentel to print secretly the New Testament, on which he had been laboring. Eighty-four sheets were printed when Colchaeus, an emissary of the Roman Church, betrayed him. He hastily

[1] Anderson, 42.

gathered up his manuscripts and what he could of the printed copies, and went to Worms, where, without further disturbance, he published two editions of the New Testament, of three thousand copies each, a quarto with a prologue, and an octavo with an epistle to the reader. In preparing this edition he used the second edition of the Greek Testament of Erasmus. This was in 1525, only three years after Luther's German New Testament appeared.[1]

A revised edition of the New Testament was published at Antwerp in 1534, the printing being done by that prince of Bible printers, Marten Emperower. To this edition Tyndale added many passages from the Old Testament, which were read in the church services of the Christian year. In 1530 or 1531 he published his first edition, in folio, of the Pentateuch, to which he soon afterward added the book of Jonah. In 1534 a second edition of the Pentateuch was issued, embodying many changes. He also left in manuscript a translation of the Old Testament from Joshua to the end of Second Chronicles.

Just as the third edition of his New Testa-

[1]Dore, 21.

ment was coming from the press he was arrested, and on Friday, October 6, 1536, he was strangled and burnt at the stake. His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

Thus do we see that the first English Bible had to seek a place of publication in a foreign land, and that the man who translated and gave it to his countrymen died as a martyr. We may judge how radical were the measures taken to destroy Tyndale's work when we know that of the original quarto edition only a part of one copy, covering the prologue and Matthew's Gospel up to Chapter 22:12, is now known to be in existence, while the only perfect copy of the octavo edition is preserved in the library of the Baptist College at Bristol, England. Of several other editions not a single copy remains.[1]

After the death of Tyndale his New Testament continued to have a wide circulation. In the very year of his death a folio edition was printed in England. Dore mentions forty editions issued before 1556.

It is not easy to state the effect of Tyndale's version on the effort to provide an English

[1]Condit, 102.

translation of the Bible, to which it was such a notable contribution. It is not only the first translation which obtained a general circulation through printing, but it is first also in character. It lies at the foundation of all subsequent translations.

Many reasons might be given for the phenomenal success which attended his effort.

He had the version of Wycliffe, with its keen spiritual appreciation of the truth, of which he made great use.

He had also Luther's German version, which had so recently been issued. Whether he ever actually consulted with Luther or not is hard to decide, but that he made frequent use of Luther's New Testament no one will question who will compare the two.

He was himself an independent scholar. His knowledge of Greek is seen in his translations of the Greek classics, and his hearty appreciation of the new intellectual quickening which grew out of the renewed study of the Greek language. In his imprisonment he pleads for his Hebrew lexicon, Bible, and grammar, that he may beguile the tedious monotony by a critical study of the Old Testament. Van dem Busche, Hebrew professor

at Marburg at the time, says he was so skilled in seven languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, and German—that whichever he might be speaking you would think it was his native language.[1]

Added to all other advantages, and perhaps more than all others, was the character of his own spiritual life. From boyhood his one desire had been to see the Scriptures translated into the language of the common people. To accomplish this he labored through life; for this he died at the stake. And although he did not live to see the translation completed, he did so much toward it, and did it so well, that he must ever remain one of the most prominent of that self-sacrificing company who have contributed to the completeness of our English Bible. Nothing more is needed to prove the value of Tyndale's work than the fact that so many of his renderings have been retained in our authorized and revised versions. Sooner than he thought, his life-long prayer was answered, for during the year of his martyrdom the King of England gave permission to print the Bible in England, and the presses of London combined

[1]Mombert, 106.

with those of Antwerp and Germany in furnishing the Gospel to the multitudes.

The death of Tyndale, and the removal of the obstacles to printing the Bible in England, mark the beginning of an era of great activity in Bible translation. During the next seventy years (1535-1606) we have no less than six different issues, each having its characteristic value, and marking an advance on its predecessors. These are as follows:

1. MYLES COVERDALE

Of these the translation of Myles Coverdale stands first. To him belongs the honor of issuing the first complete printed English Bible. Wycliffe had translated the entire Bible, with the help of Hereford, nearly two hundred years before, but it was not printed. Tyndale had seen the New Testament and part of the Old printed, but did not live to complete the whole Bible. Coverdale came when king and clergy saw it was useless to attempt to stop the people from reading the Bible, but while yet the hostility to the translations of Wycliffe and Tyndale was so bitter as to interfere with their circulation. Hence, with the freedom to publish arose the demand

for a translation which the authorities would accept. To prepare this, Myles Coverdale was chosen. He was born in Yorkshire in 1488, studied at Cambridge, became a priest in 1514, was an ardent advocate of the newer learning, accepted the evangelical ideas which were being taught, and seems to have given special attention to the study of the Scriptures in his early life. We know little of the details of his life until about the time his Bible was first published, October 4, 1535.

His first edition bore on the title-page the following inscription: "Biblia. The Bible, that is the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe. MDXXXV." It was not printed in England, but either in Antwerp,[1] where he had very intimate relations with the famous printer Jacob van Meteren, or perhaps at Cologne or Zurich.[2] But the printed sheets were sent to England, and there bound and sold freely. The next edition, in 1537, was printed in England, and had on the title-page, "Newly ouersene and corrected." At the foot of the title-page we

[1] Dore, 91.
[2] Mombert, 152.

read, "Sett forth wyth the kynges moost gracious license." This is the beginning of the "royal authority" for printing the Bible. In 1538 he issued three editions of the New Testament, containing his English version and the Vulgate in parallel columns. It was based on Tyndale, with many suggestions from Luther. Other editions of his Bible were printed in 1539, 1550, 1553—five in all.

This work of Coverdale does not profess to be made from the original languages. On the title-page of the first edition he says, "Faithfully translated out of Douche and Latyn." The evidence of his use of Luther is seen everywhere. When he differs from Tyndale the variation can almost always be explained by a reference to the Vulgate or to the German. In the dedication of his version to the king he speaks of having used five sundry interpreters, but it is uncertain to what he refers.

A great interest centers around that part of Coverdale's translation of the Old Testament which had not been prepared by Tyndale himself. Here one is attracted by the many exquisite renderings which have become dear to the Christian heart, and which first appeared

in this version. Especially is this true of the Psalms, which have been preserved in the rendering of Coverdale in the English Prayer Book almost word for word. While, therefore, his work was not in the line of original study of the Hebrew and Greek, yet his painstaking fidelity and his earnest spirituality found expression in language which has become embedded in our choicest religious vocabulary. About three-fourths of the Old Testament first appeared in English in Coverdale's version, and his improved rendering of many passages gives his work a permanent value.

2. THOMAS MATTHEW

About the same time that Coverdale's second edition came from the press, 1537, appeared a folio volume containing the Old and New Testament, with the name of Thomas Matthew as editor. There is no indication as to the place of printing, but the publishers were Grafton and Whitechurch of London, as indicated by the letters R.G. and E.W.

Much discussion has centered on the name of this editor, Thomas Matthew. No such person is known, and it is now generally conceded that the name was chosen to conceal the

real editor. In the preface the letters J. R. occur. This has led to the conviction that the editor was none other than John Rogers, Tyndale's intimate friend, to whom he gave his papers, and who was afterward burned at the stake at Smithfield. He was a graduate of Oxford, a leader in the reformatory movements, lived some years in Antwerp, where he became very closely associated with Tyndale and Coverdale, came back to England during the reign of Edward VI, and was one of the victims of the bloody Mary in February, 1555.[1]

This edition of Matthew contains almost nothing original, and yet a very great interest centers in it. It is almost a literal reprint of Tyndale, supplemented by that of Coverdale. The only part for which the editor seems in any way responsible is the Apocryphal Book, Prayer of Manasses, which he translated from the French of DeWingle, or Olivetan. Of the French translation recently issued he made much use.

Our interest in the work grows out of its relation to its predecessors. Tyndale's translation had been especially obnoxious to the

[1] Moulton, 124.

authorities both of church and state. They were determined to suppress it. To this end they bought up entire editions and burned them. They caused the translator, although living in a foreign land, to be arrested, strangled, and burned because he had published it. They forbade the people to read it, under severe penalties. They passed laws and preached solemn sermons to restrain its circulation. But scarcely had the author given his life, when a translation almost identical with that for which he died was published under another name, and the king gives his authority for printing and circulating it, the Archbishop of Canterbury says it is the best translation he has seen, and hopes it may be read by the people, and the chief counselor of the king, Cromwell, bids it Godspeed. So the work for which Tyndale died was, two years later, published in England by the authority of the king.

This work of Matthew was much improved in the several editions published in 1538, 1549, and 1551, and became a prominent factor in all subsequent translations until our present text was established.

3. RICHARD TAVERNER

Almost simultaneously with the second edition of the Matthew's Bible, in 1539, Richard Taverner edited a Bible, consisting largely of a revision of that of Matthew, but omitting most of his notes and containing new introductory matter. He made comparatively few changes in the text, substituting what he considered better readings from other writers. He was one of the great Greek scholars of the time, and made good use of his knowledge in his emendations of the New Testament. In the Old Testament he leans strongly on the Vulgate. His work shows a lack of that calm judgment which is necessary for a sound translator, and although it was allowed to be read in the churches, it had but a limited circulation, and did not contribute materially to the advancement of the great work of securing a permanent translation.

4. THE GREAT BIBLE

Neither the church nor state authorities would become reconciled to the existing translations, although they had at last sanctioned their publication. A new edition was there-

fore prepared under their own supervision, Cromwell himself being the leading spirit in the movement. In order to secure better work than could be done in England, Cromwell obtained from the French king permission to have the printing done in Paris, but before it was completed the church became alarmed, and the French inquisitor-general ordered the work to cease, the printed copies to be destroyed, and the workmen to be imprisoned. Much had already been sent to England before the work was stopped, and Cromwell succeeded in obtaining the copies which had been confiscated, purchased the printing outfit, and brought out the edition in London in 1539. In size it exceeded all the editions which preceded it, its pages being fifteen inches long, and nearly ten inches wide.[1] This gave occasion for the name "The Great Bible," which is given to all the editions issued under the arrangement introduced by Cromwell. Every parish was ordered to place a copy in the church, where the people could use it, and it was eagerly read by all classes.

For this first edition Cromwell plainly deserves the credit. He secured from the king

[1] Dore, 155.

the royal patent for its publication. He obtained permission to print it in Paris, and when trouble arose, brought the entire outfit to London, and insisted on having the mechanical structure embrace the finest results of the printer's art. After Cromwell's death, when a new edition was called for in 1540, Archbishop Cranmer wrote for it an elaborate prologue, and became greatly interested in its circulation. Hence all the issues of this series are often called Cranmer's Bibles, but the idea did not originate with him, and he had nothing to do with the first edition. The work became very popular, and many large editions were published, the last folio in 1568, and the last quarto in 1569.[1]

The literary part of the work was under the supervision of Myles Coverdale, who seems to have had the assistance of others, but their names are not given. On the title-page it says, "Truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes by the dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men experte in the forsayde tongues."

It may be called an eclectic edition. It is a revision of Tyndale, Coverdale, and

[1]Dore, 187.

Matthew's earlier versions, compared with the original Hebrew and Greek, the German of Luther, and the Swiss theologians at Zurich, the new Latin translation of the Old Testament made by Pagninus and Münster, and the Latin translation of the New Testament by Erasmus. The influence of Luther and Münster is quite manifest.[1] This version plainly shows the care with which Coverdale did his work, as there are many changes in each successive edition, not all of which are improvements. The rendering of the Psalms of this issue, being largely a reprint of Coverdale's earlier version, has passed into the Episcopal Prayer Book, and is highly prized for its melody. A special feature of the "Great Bible" is the supplementary readings, enclosed in brackets, by which he thought to make the sense plainer.

5. THE GENEVA BIBLE

During the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII the Papal influence became more prominent, and the circulation of the Scriptures almost ceased. The Great Bible was the only one whose reading was permitted, and around

[1] Mombert, 209.

that restrictions were thrown which almost prohibited its use. With Edward VI a new impulse was given, and many new editions were put forth, but no new versions were made. Edward was followed by Mary, whose rabid Romanism showed itself in the prohibition of the public reading of the Bible, the burning of the reformers, and the destruction of existing copies of the Scriptures. During the five years of her reign no Bible or Testament was published in England.[1] Learned men, especially those of reformed tendencies, fled to the Continent, and there waited in prayerful patience for a better day.

Of these religious exiles, a company consisting of several hundred had gathered at Geneva. Among them were many of the most distinguished scholars of England. Geneva was at this time a center of sacred learning.

No less than three great translations of the Bible, the French, Italian, and English, were being made there. Among the most prominent of the English colony were William Wittingham, who had married a sister of John Calvin, and Myles Coverdale. They determined to prepare an English Bible of more

[1] Moulton, 153.

moderate size and cost, more accurate in its renderings, and accompanied with a brief commentary and such explanatory statements as were needed for a clear understanding of the text.

The New Testament appeared June 10, 1557, with an introduction written by Calvin. Wittingham is supposed to have done most of the work of translating. Besides the more favorable size and notes it had the additional advantage of being printed in Roman type, and also of having the chapters and verses indicated as they are in the Bibles of our day. It does not depart largely from Tyndale, but has many readings from Coverdale and frequent references to Beza. It presents also many various readings. The changes generally indicate an improved scholarship.

The entire Bible appeared in 1560, under the supervision of the same scholars, most of whom returned to England on the accession of Elizabeth, while Wittingham and one or two others remained in Geneva until the work was printed. In this the New Testament shows many changes from the edition of 1557. The expense of this first Bible was borne by the English congregation then liv-

ing in Geneva, and great pains were taken to make it as complete as possible. Various readings were added in the margin, words in the text, but not in the original, were put in italics, proper names were spelled more in harmony with the original, and many other versions were consulted. The influence of Beza on the text and of Calvin on the notes is very pronounced. The result was a version which ranks very high as a literary product, but is somewhat partial in its comments.

This Geneva Bible at once obtained an immense circulation. From 1560 to 1616 not a year passed without a new edition. In 1599 no less than ten editions were issued. The last editions in England were the quarto of 1615 and the folio of 1616. Besides these, many editions were printed in Amsterdam, from which city 150,000 copies were imported after the printing of it ceased in England.[1] The first Bible printed in Scotland, in 1562, was a copy of this version.

6. THE BISHOP'S BIBLE

The circulation of the English Bible was now confined to the two great editions known

[1] Dore, 203.

as "The Great Bible" and "The Geneva Bible." Neither of these proved entirely satisfactory. The Geneva Bible had strong anti-Episcopal and Calvinistic tendencies; the Great Bible had many grave defects in its renderings, which made it unpopular. This led to a demand, especially on the part of the authorities, for a new translation in which both these defects might be remedied. Archbishop Matthew Parker of Canterbury took the matter in hand, and finally succeeded in producing what is known as the Bishop's Bible. On account of Parker's leadership it is often called "The Parker Bible." It is also called "Queen Elizabeth's Bible," because it is the only new version issued during her reign.[1]

Parker's plan was to divide the Bible into sections, and assign one of these to a Bishop or other leading scholar, who was to make a careful translation, and this was to be again subject to a revision by the Archbishop himself. About twenty different persons were thus employed, three-fourths of whom were Bishops. He thought in this way to produce a version free from party spirit and fairly representative of the scholarship of the day.

[1] Condit, 275.

It is to be noted, however, that a large majority of his co-laborers belonged to the house of Bishops.

His instructions were to follow the common English translation used in the churches (the Great Bible), except where the Hebrew or Greek required a change, to make no bitter notes, and not to attempt to decide any controverted questions. They were also to consult carefully the new Latin translation of Münster, to indicate such passages as contained genealogies and other unedifying matter, so that the reader might pass over them if he chose, and to substitute more pleasing terms for such as might be deemed objectionable for public reading.

After more than four years the first edition appeared in 1568. It was a large folio, elegantly printed, and, besides the text, contained a large number of copper-plate engravings and maps, brief notes, a preface by Archbishop Parker, and the prologue which Cranmer prefixed to the Great Bible. A strenuous effort was made to have it take the place of all preceding translations. Convocation in 1571 ordered that every Bishop should place a copy in his dining-room for the benefit of his ser-

vants. A copy was also to be placed in every cathedral, and as far as possible in every church. On the title-page of an edition in 1574 we read, "Set foorth by aucthoritie," although it does not say by whose authority. In this way the Bishop's Bible was introduced into the public service of the church, taking the place of the Great Bible, but the Geneva Bible was the Bible of the home, the favorite of all those who did not hold the extreme churchly views then agitated. Many editions were issued, the last in 1606. The successive editions were revised, so that between the first and the last editions there is a very great difference in the rendering of the text.

We are not surprised to learn that this version proved no more satisfactory than those which preceded it—in fact, was in some respects less satisfactory. Work done by so many different men would show great inequality. Being so largely the work of the Bishops, it failed to satisfy the independent element. Westcott[1] says there is little to recommend the original readings of the Bishop's Bible in the Old Testament; in the New Testament the translation shows more vigor and value, the

[1] Hist. of the Eng. Bible, 310.

Greek scholarship of the Bishops being superior to their knowledge of Hebrew.

7. THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

When James I became King he found England in a great turmoil, the Puritans and the Church of England parties being in a bitter contest for the supremacy. A conference summoned by the King met January 14-16, 1604, at which the two parties presented their grievances before him. At this conference the subject of a new translation was presented, the King and both parties agreeing that such a work ought to be undertaken. On the twenty-second of July, in the same year, the King announced that he had chosen fifty-four translators, who were to be divided into six companies, two of which were to meet at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. Fifteen rules were drawn up for the conduct of the work. The Bishop's Bible was to be followed, except when the Hebrew or Greek called for a change. The old spelling of proper names and ecclesiastical terms must be retained. No marginal notes were to be inserted, except in explanation of a Hebrew or Greek word. Each man of a company

must first translate a passage, then his work must be revised by the company to which he belonged, and finally sent to the other companies for further scrutiny. The whole Bible was then to be reviewed by a company of six, or perhaps twelve, who gave nine months to their revision.

Seven years were thus consumed, and in 1611 the new version was published. It was a folio edition in black letter, having the well-known dedication to the King and a very lengthy translator's preface, which fortunately is never published in later editions. It cannot now be shown that the new version ever had any "authority" given it, although it is so stated on the title-page. It had to make its way on its own merits, and for a generation had a formidable rival in the Geneva Bible, which continued to be the popular favorite.

Although the Bishop's Bible was the standard, the revisers adhered far more closely to the Geneva version. When published, although the Roman Catholics denounced it because of its Protestant proclivities, and the High Church party was not satisfied with it, its sterling value finally gave it the supremacy, which it has retained ever since. Occasional

attempts have been made to correct its manifest defects, and numerous so-called revised editions have been issued. Very many private translations have been made, some of them having great literary merit, but none of them seriously interfering with its use among all English-speaking Christians.

Not until the elaborate revision of 1884 have any such efforts made a lasting impression. The revised Bible then published by the large company of English and American scholars contains many changes, the most of which are manifestly improvements, and deserve the attention of those who seek an accurate rendering of the original. The advance in every department of Biblical knowledge has made it possible to introduce changes which throw light on many obscure passages, and thereby render still more useful the Book which for nearly three centuries has been dear to us, both for its beauty and its fidelity.

It remains to say a few words about the efforts of the Roman Catholics to provide an English Bible for use among their own members. Against all the work so far described they have maintained a constant and bitter

opposition, which has been directed not only against the versions, but against the persons who made them. And they have never made any effort to provide a better one until they were compelled to do so.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth many Romanists went to the Continent. Among them was William Allen, afterward a Cardinal, who established a college at Douay and another at Rheims. From the latter place an edition of the New Testament was issued in 1582, and twenty-seven years later the Old Testament was published at Douay. They admit they do not furnish this translation because they think it necessary for the people to have the Bible in their own language, but because of the present necessity, and in pure compassion to their countrymen whose use of the profane and erroneous Protestant translations then circulating were endangering their souls. They used only the Vulgate, instead of the original Hebrew and Greek, because it had been pronounced "authentic" by the Council of Trent.

The man who had most to do with making this translation was Gregory Martin, one of the first scholars of his day. But its partisan

bias is so manifest, and its introduction of Latin terms so frequent, that it has had a very limited circulation, even among those of the Roman faith. Dr. Nary, who published a new version in 1718-19, says of it, "The Language of it is so old, the Words in so many places so obsolete, that in a number of places it is unintelligible, and all over so grating to the Ears of such as are accustomed to speak, in a manner, another Language, that most people will not be at pains of reading them."[1] The work has been justly condemned, not so much because it is false to the original, as because of its refusal to accept the results of the best scholarship.

A second edition of it was issued in 1635. In 1749-50 Richard Challoner revised it, introducing much of the language of our King James version. This has now generally taken the place of the original Rheims and Douay version, although the old name still clings to it. The first American edition of this version was published in Philadelphia in 1790, and is a reprint of Challoner's second edition, with the sanction of the Archbishop of Baltimore.[2]

[1] Lewis, Hist. of Eng. Trans., 357.
[2] Shea, 4.

The Hollandish Translation

The Hollandish Translation

When Europe awoke from its long intellectual sleep, one of its first thoughts was for the Bible. For ages it had been almost a forgotten book. The masses knew of it only as they heard portions of it read in the church services, in a language they could not understand, and often by priests who knew not the meaning of the words they repeated. But when they began to think, they recognized the importance of the Word of God, and long before the Reformation was inaugurated by Luther and his companions, there was a desire for a translation in a language they could read for themselves. Nowhere was this more manifest than in the Netherlands. When Wessel Gansfort, of Groningen, one of the reformers before the Reformation, stood before Pope Nicholas V, the Pope asked him what he most of all desired. Gansfort said, "Give me a copy of the Hebrew Bible, that I may carry it home to my native land." "You silly fellow!"

said the Pope, "why do you not ask to be made Bishop, or something of that sort?" "For the simple reason," said Gansfort, "that I have no need of such things."

The earliest attempts to furnish the people of the Netherlands with a Bible in their own language, of which we have accurate knowledge, were made by the Waldenses, who turned parts of the Scripture into Low Dutch rhymes, according to the custom of that period. Their reasons for so doing are thus given by themselves: "Dat daerin was groote nutschap, no boerte, no fabulen, no truffe, no falserde, mer were worden. Dat hier en daer wel was een herde coerste, mer dat het pit ende die soethit vangoet en selicheit der in wel was te bekennen." (That there was great advantage in it—the Bible—no jests, no fables, no trifles, no deceits, but words of truth. That indeed there was here and there a hard crust, but the marrow and sweetness of what was good and holy might be easily discerned in it.)[1]

Such writings existed very early in the thirteenth century, perhaps even before 1200 A. D., but they can hardly be called translations

[1] Townley, I, 356. Brandt, I, Book I.

of the Bible. They were rather paraphrases of such portions of the Scriptures as had elements which met the popular craving for the truth, and were adapted to a popular statement. Being recited or sung by those who had learned something of their inner value, they took strong hold of the people, and did much to quicken that desire for the Word of God which afterward led to its complete translation. Being made long before the art of printing was discovered, they were not carefully preserved, and we know very little as to their exact contents or extent.

In 1270 Jacob Van Maerlandt, who has been called the father of Dutch literature, finished one of these "Rijmbijbels," which was very popular. It did not contain all the Old Testament, and only the Gospels of the New Testament. He translated from the Vulgate, and was influenced in his ideas very largely by the French theologians of the twelfth century.

This effort aroused the wrath of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Utrecht, who thought it was disrespectful to the Scriptures thus to bring them within the reach of the common people, and Van Maerlandt nearly lost his life as a reward for his labor.

The following lines will show the character of these writings, taken from Ps., 130:1:

"Van diepen Here wt mire herten
Roep ic claghende mine smerten."

Only a very few fragmentary copies of these "Rijmbijbels" remain, and these vary in the use of words and spelling, having all been made by hand.[1]

A prose translation of about 1300 A.D. is also mentioned, but its author is unknown, and its very existence uncertain.[2] A manuscript of 1358, supposed by some to be a copy of this earliest prose translation, is made in two parts. Part I contains the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and the four books of Kings. These are translated freely from the Vulgate, often omitting portions unnecessary, as the close of Ex., 21. The text is supplemented by selections from the Historica Scholastica, containing edifying remarks, etc. Part II has Tobias, Daniel, History of Darius and Cyrus from the Scholastica, Esdras, Esther, an account of Alexander the Great, a history of the Maccabees, and a treatise about Cæsar, Herod, etc., designed to form a historical

[1] Looman, 181.
[2] Townley, I, 420.

connection between the Old and New Testament. This was prepared in the province of Holland, and is very unequal in merit, but clear and fluent in style.

The attempts at translation so far described are of interest mainly because they tell us how the great work of Bible translation began. Like everything intellectual and spiritual of that age, they were childish and incomplete, and not having the help of the printer's art to multiply and preserve them, they have so completely perished that hardly a fragment of them remains. Here and there among the great libraries of Europe is a faded remnant which has survived the passing years; of all the rest only a shadowy and often unreliable tradition remains. But if the work itself was tentative and transient, not so the deep undercurrent of spiritual life quickened by their homely presentation. It was the good seed of the Divine Word, and when thus presented the Holy Spirit quickened it and inspired a longing for a more complete and accurate translation which would fully meet the aspirations of the soul.

II. EARLY PRINTED TRANSLATIONS

Twenty-five years after the art of printing was introduced, we find what may be called the first attempt at a real translation of the Bible into the Holland language. In 1477 Jacob Jacobzoon and Maurits Ymands, of Middelburg, issued at Delft an edition of the Old Testament, except the Psalms, which were issued three years later, translated from the Vulgate, and bearing the inscription, "To the Glory of God and the edification and instruction of Christ's believing people." Another translation appeared at Gouda in 1479. All these were made from the Vulgate, and were very defective. Along with the text were many notes and references, sometimes on the margin and sometimes in the text, but made in such a way that a person unacquainted with the original could not tell what was text and what was commentary. They are now of interest chiefly because they show how gradually the work of translation has advanced.

The year 1516 marks an era of great interest in the history of Bible translation in the Netherlands. At Antwerp Nicholaas de Grave issued a Bible, translated from the Vulgate,

and bearing on its title-page the words, "Uyt den latynschen en walschen ghetranslateerd." (Out of the Latin and Walloon translated.)[1]

In the same year Erasmus, the celebrated Greek scholar, published, at Delft, the first translation of the New Testament into the language of the Netherlands. This was a very great advance upon anything before undertaken. Hitherto the translators had been content to use the Vulgate as the basis of their work, and along with that imperfect text had incorporated many notes of their own, much to the confusion of their readers. But Erasmus set the example of going to the original Greek, and gave nothing but a translation of the text.

But when Luther's German New Testament appeared in 1523, it was immediately translated into Dutch and published both at Antwerp and Amsterdam. This soon crowded out the more scholarly work of Erasmus, and was as eagerly sought in the Netherlands as it had been in Germany. In 1534 the Old Testament, based also on Luther's German version, appeared. In this were notes criticising the Roman Catholic Church, and advocat-

[1] Looman, 183.

ing much greater freedom in the study of God's Word.[1]

Ten years after Erasmus issued his translation of the New Testament directly from the Greek, on the 26th of September, 1526, the first entire Bible was issued at Antwerp, by Jacob Liesveldt. The translators are unknown, but the work occupies a most prominent place in the history of Bible translations into the Netherlandish language. It was based on the work of Luther, so far as that had appeared, and the rest followed a German translation published at Cologne in 1480, but with the style somewhat improved. This old German version of Cologne had been published by Henry Quenstel, in folio, with illuminated capitals in the text, and with marginal notes, by Nicholaas de Lyra. It was colloquial German, and could be easily remodeled so as to become intelligible to the Hollanders.[2]

Liesveldt's Bible became very popular. The first edition was very inconvenient in form, and was overloaded with illustrations, which may be called a parody on art as compared with modern work in that direction; and it

[1] Looman, 183.
[2] Looman, 184.

was far from being accurate in its renderings, but it soon obtained a very wide circulation. In 1532 a second edition appeared, a third in 1534, a fourth in 1536, a fifth in 1538, and a sixth in 1542. This last edition was provided with marginal notes, and bore the following title-page: "The Bible, corrected with great precision, and having in the margin the age of the world, and how long the events in the history of the Bible occurred before Christ; and having gathered out of the Fasciculus Temporum and out of the Chronicles of all the world the chief histories of the mighty Heathen kingdoms against which the Holy Scriptures frequently warn us; and lastly having corrected with great precision the oldest and most approved copies (translations) which have appeared. Cum Gratia et Priveligio. Moreover the contents of each chapter are given, as well in the Old as in the New Testament, together with some beautiful explanations in the margin which have never been given before. Antwerpen, 3 June 1542."

This edition of June 3, 1542, soon became the standard among the Protestants, even the Lutherans and Menonites using it for many years. There is another fact which gives

great prominence to this last edition of Liesveldt's Bible. Among the marginal notes was one on I Peter, 2:5, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house," which reads, "Opten steen getimmert syn, is alle onse hope setten op Christum alleen." This was too much for Rome. When the first edition appeared injunctions were issued forbidding any one to read it, and calling attention to its heretical character. Nicholaas van Whinge (Wingh), a canon of Louvaine, writing doubtless under instructions from Rome, said of it, "The first Dutch Bible, published at Antwerp by Jacob Liesveldt, was translated not from the Latin, but from a foreign Bible, which had been translated in German by M. Luther and some other of his helpers, notorious and damned heretics of our times, who, as they are rejectors of the holy Church, have Germanized the Bible out of different new translations, not following the old Latin or Vulgate of the universal Romish Church, and thus have they in many places stated things differently from what is contained in the Bible, and have perverted the Holy Scripture in such a way as to support their evil notions." Placards were issued condemning the heretical

books of Luther and others, and all translations of the Bible which leaned toward the Lutheran teachings, or which had marginal notes which did not agree with the Roman Church, and ordering them burned. This not proving effectual, it was added that any person not complying with the demand to burn, should himself be burned at the stake. In 1545 Liesveldt himself was seized and beheaded at Antwerp because he had dared to insert in his marginal notes that our salvation depends on Christ alone. Thus did this noble work of Bible translation receive its baptism of blood, and as always in the history of the Church, the blood of heroic men who do not count their own lives dear unto themselves, gave greater emphasis to the truth, and made more intense the desire and determination to have the word of God in their own language.

The martyrdom of Liesveldt, designed by his enemies to secure the suppression and destruction of the translation he had made for his countrymen, tended only to make it more precious to them. "Over its pages they sighed and wept; it was the companion of their solitary hours, the golden jewel, cheaply gotten at the cost of treasure and blood."

The most fearful threats of Rome had only one result: they read it and loved it more passionately than before. They would not give it up, even to save their lives. Between 1522 and 1543 more than one hundred editions were published.[1]

This edition of 1542 was the instrument used by God to bring the saving knowledge of Christ to a multitude of souls all through the Netherlands.[2]

The demand for a translated Bible was now so universal that both Protestants and Roman Catholics engaged in it. In the interests of the Roman Catholics, Nicholaas van Whinge, of the University of Louvaine, prepared an edition of the entire Bible, which he corrected according to the Latin Vulgate. This was examined by men appointed by the Emperor Charles V, and with his endorsement went through several editions, and became the standard for the Roman Catholics.[3]

The last edition of Liesveldt was revised in 1556[4] or 1558[5] at Embden, by Steven Mirdman and Jan Gaillaert, who made use of a

[1] Ypeij en Dermout, I, 113.
[2] Townley, II, 63, 65. Looman, 185.
[3] Townley, II, 362.
[4] Townley. [5] Looman.

translation of Zwinglius, which had been published at Zurich in 1525, and at Magdeburg in 1554. They used the translation of Liesveldt to the end of Job, simply correcting the text to agree with that of Zwinglius, and substituting the text of Zwinglius for the rest of the Bible. In this there were no verse divisions.[1]

In 1560 Nicholaas Biestkens prepared an edition in which the verses were marked, and which contained many marginal notes. This was frequently reissued, that of 1646 being a large folio, with a beautiful title-page and plates, forming a real work of art. This last edition was issued at Antwerp, at that time a great center of Bible distribution.

A still more accurate and valuable edition was undertaken by Jan van Uitenhoven, assisted by John à Lasco, a famous Polish theologian who had settled in Embden. It was published at Embden in 1565. This was designed to satisfy those who desired a more Calvanistic tone than Luther's version furnished. Reuss says the New Testament of this edition appeared in 1556, and the entire Bible in 1562, little alteration being made in the Old Testament.[2] It was based upon

[1] Looman, 186.
[2] 504.

Luther's German translation, compared with that of the French made by Olivetan, Geneva, 1551, and soon gained general acceptance among those who valued exactness of doctrinal expression. It had no official authority of church or state, but went through many large editions, and still continues in use among the Lutherans of the Netherlands, a revised form having been made by A. Vischer in 1648.

In many respects the translation of Uitenhoven is superior to the Staten-Bibel, especially in its smooth, flowing style and its thoroughly western spirit. It is more like Luther's translation, and is almost entirely free from antiquated terms.[1]

As we look over the history of this period we see how the demand for the truth leads to a more accurate translation. Learned men, full of love for God's Word, gave themselves to the most careful study, that they might furnish a better statement of what God had said. Every appliance of art was consecrated to printing the results of their labors. What one man had done as the utmost of his ability became the stepping stone upon which another mounted to a higher point of observation.

[1] Ypeij en Dermout, I, H. 1, II, 373.

Often the life labor given to a translation was consecrated by martyrdom when the translation was finished. But all the time that truth was sinking deeper and spreading its roots wider in Christian hearts which could not be satisfied until they could read in their own mother tongue the wonderful message of God to sinful men.

III. TRANSLATIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT

We reach now the third and crowning period of the translations. At first we find only the rhymed paraphrase of the more popular parts of the Scriptures. Then come the various translations made from the Vulgate or from the German translation of Luther. Except the New Testament of Erasmus, no one has yet ventured to go back to the orginal Hebrew or Greek and translate directly from these ancient and supreme authorities.

But all the revisions and new efforts so far made did not satisfy the demands of the Christian people. They called for a translation which should come directly from the original. The time for this had at length come.

As early as 1571 the Provincial Synod at

Embden, in response to a petition of some Holland emigrants living at Cologne, decided that a new translation ought to be made, but referred the matter to a general synod of the church. The matter was again discussed at a synod held at Dort in 1574, and again in 1578; but it was not until 1591 that a man was found for the work.[1] Philip de Marnix, Lord of St. Aldegonde, one of the most brilliant and learned men of the great Reformation period, had said, "There is no translation in the evangelical churches which deviates so much from the Hebrew as the translation of Luther, and out of a bad German translation we have made a worse Dutch translation."[2] Among his other acquirements he was a great Hebrew scholar. He had already given much attention to a translation of the Bible; and a metrical version of the Psalms prepared by him is still much esteemed for its fidelity to the orginal Hebrew and for its beautiful language. Motley says of him: "Scholar, theologian, diplomatist, swordsman, orator, poet, pamphleteer, he had a genius for all things, and was eminent in all." He began his new translation

[1] Heringa, 66.
[2] Brandt, Book XV.

in September, 1594. The States General agreed to pay him a yearly salary of 1,400 guilders, with 300 guilders more as house rent.

He was to be assisted by five ministers, one from each provincial synod. He was to live in Leyden, so as to be near the theological faculty and the library of the university. Four years were spent in the work, when it was cut short by his death, in December, 1598. After his death the work made very little progress, until in 1608, with the death of Helmichius, one of the helpers of Marnix, it ceased altogether.

It may seem at first as if this failure was greatly to be regretted. St. Aldegonde was one of the finest Hebrew scholars in the Netherlands, and the Netherlands were then famous for men of great learning. He was a stanch Calvinist, a devoted patriot, and a sincere Christian. But he lacked that deep spiritual comprehension and grasp of the truth which in Luther more than compensated for his lack of profound scholarship. His translation would have been eminently scholarly, but if it had failed to bring out clearly the deep spiritual feeling which pervades the Scriptures it would have been found wanting in that which

is most vital. As it is, the work done by St. Aldegonde was, like that of John the Baptist, the herald of a greater translation, which would for ages meet the highest spiritual demands of the people for whom it was intended.[1]

When the National Synod of Dordrecht convened, November 13, 1618, one of the first questions to be considered was in regard to a new translation of the Scriptures, to be made directly from the Hebrew and Greek. As soon as an opportunity was given for the delegates to present communications from the Classes which sent them, the delegates from the Classes of Edam, Zeeland, and Overysel brought before the Synod this matter of a new translation, which had been before resolved upon and begun but was never finished. The judgment of the Synod was that the time had now fully come when such a work should be carried out. A few indeed objected. Heringa[2] thus speaks of them: "Hier komt bij, dat het, ten geenen tijde, in de Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk, ontbrak, aan eenvoudige, kortzigtige, bevooroordeelde menschen, afkeerig van het nieuwe, om dat het niew, en boven mate gehecht aan

[1] Brandt, I, 106, 798, 799.
[2] 85.

het oude, om dat het oud is." (Add to this that at no time in the history of the Reformed Church has it lacked in simple, short-sighted, prejudiced people, opposed to the new because it is new, and in a special manner attached to the old because it is old.) But this spirit of opposition was swallowed up in the resolute determination of the great majority to proceed with the work of arranging the details necessary to secure the long-desired result. At its sixth session the Synod gave itself wholly to the arrangement of details for conducting the work, and continued to the exclusion of every other subject, for the five following sessions. The president, Jan Bogerman, opened the session with a prayer in Latin, as remarkable for its length as for its beauty of expression. Huet says of it, "The sweetest Psalms of Marnix are not more beautiful than the Latin prayer of Bogerman."[1] He then recounted the previous attempts to secure a proper translation, and told of their failure, and said the Synod ought now to give the matter the most serious attention. The delegates from Great Britain told of the great English translation lately completed, after which the Holland pro-

[1]Land von Rembrandt, Het Geloof, 16.

fessors, ministers, and elders expressed their views as to the importance of the work and the manner in which it should be done, and finally the president read a written statement of his own ideas; from which it appeared that they were unanimously of the opinion that it must be at once undertaken.

The Synod then proceeded to establish some general regulations in regard to the work.

First of all, they decided that the translators should adhere always to the original text. (Ut originali textui semper religiose adhaereant.) And if they added any words to make the sense plainer, they were to enclose every such word in brackets that the reader might know it was not a part of the original text. When the Dutch idiom would not admit of a literal rendering they were to give the literal meaning in the margin.

The Apocryphal books should also be translated, but with less care, be printed in smaller type, and have a warning preface and polemic notes to show they were only human productions. They were also to be placed, not between the Old and New Testaments, but at the end of the New Testament. As for certain apocryphal New Testament books,

which had found a place in some of the old translations, it was the unanimous opinion that they should be entirely excluded.[1]

After a long and very animated discussion as to whether the translators should use the pronoun *Du*, after the German custom of Luther, or *Gij*, when addressing the Deity, they decided, by a bare majority, to use *Gij* and *U*. As for the Hebrew, Jehovah, it was decided that it should be translated "Heere," unless some special use of the term rendered the use of "Jehovah" necessary.

These preliminaries being settled, the Synod, having rejected a resolution that the work of translating the Old Testament be entrusted to a professor of Hebrew, and the New Testament to a professor of Greek, proceeded by a closed ballot to designate suitable persons to undertake the work. They appointed three translators for the Old Testament, and three for the New Testament and Apocrypha, with as many substitutes in case any of them should be unable to go on with the work. Besides these were two reviewers or revisers from each province, to whom the work of the revision was to be submitted for inspec-

[1]Brandt, Book 33, 50.

tion and such correction as seemed necessary. After both bodies had considered the matter separately, they were to have a joint session, and there determine the final form in which the translation was to appear.

At the head of all was Bogerman himself. He was the natural successor of Marnix. Huet says: "Marnix and Bogerman were birds of a feather. Marnix was in frequent correspondence with Sibrandus Lubbertus, professor at Frankener, who was Bogerman's chief teacher. Although both were heresy-hunters, still both possessed the genius of piety. The prose of Marnix was a model for Bogerman, and not for Bogerman only, but for all his co-laborers."

All the translators and nearly all the reviewers were orthodox theologians, some being pastors taken from leading pulpits, others taken from the different universities. All parts of the Netherlands were represented, so as to avoid any appearance of sectionalism. Whenever necessary, professors of history and rectors of the gymnasia who were known to be proficient in any department were freely consulted. Not orthodoxy alone, but sound

learning, were considered essential qualifications.[1]

The Synod also directed the different companies to meet in some university town, so as to be able to consult the professors and have access to books.

It was thought the work might be completed in four years, but it was nearly ten years before the translators permanently gathered in Leyden to do the work assigned them, although in the meantime the different members had done much preliminary study, and another ten years before the work was ready for distribution. While engaged in their work in Leyden a fearful pestilence swept over the city, carrying away 20,000 people, but although the place where the translators were sitting was near a cemetery where there were often more than one hundred interments in a day, after prayer for divine direction they resolved to continue their labors, and not one of them was attacked by the plague.

During the progress of the work several of the translators died, and their substitutes took their places. In 1632 the first translation was completed, and on the 10th of October,

[1]Huet, Het Geloof, 16.

1635, the finishing touches were given by the combined company of translators and supervisors. Two years more were consumed in printing, and in 1637 a folio edition was issued from the presses at Leyden and The Hague, and an octavo from Amsterdam.

The financial part of this great work was assumed by the States-General. They gave liberal salaries to the men, who were also allowed to retain their income as professors or pastors; paid the expense of their removal to Leyden; made an allowance for house rent; gave them a generous sum for the purchase of such books as might be necessary, and made them a donation when their work was finished.

In return, the States-General stipulated that the translation should not be issued by the Church alone, nor as the work of an individual, but should also have their approval. Accordingly when completed, it was submitted to them, and on the 29th of July, 1637, they passed a resolution, in which, after giving their approval and recommending its use, they say: "In this translation everything is collected which the truth and the meaning of the words and their sense make necessary, and therefore

it must be accepted and used in the churches and public schools of the Netherlands."[1]

At the same time it was resolved that the book should bear the name "Staten-Bibel," and to this day every such Bible has on its title-page the words—

"DOOR DE HOOGMOGENDE HEEREN"

When first issued there were many who opposed its use. They said it perverted the truth, and would unsettle the minds of the people. In Amsterdam, especially, this antagonism was most intense, and it was several years before its use became general in the churches of the different provinces.[2]

But it was a great day for Holland when this translation appeared. Hitherto they had only the imperfect translations made from the Vulgate or the German, against which Marnix had uttered such a severe comment. Frequent attempts had been made to secure something better, but always in vain. Ever since the Synod of Embden, in 1571, the cry had been growing louder and more imperative for a more faithful rendering of the original.

[1] Looman, 189.
[2] Ypij en Dermout, II, 370.

Twenty years had passed since the memorable action of the Synod of Dort was taken. All the energies of the State, and all the wisdom and the piety of the church had been taxed to meet the growing demand for a better translation. When at length it appeared, there was joy through all the Netherlands. The States-General and the Synods of the Church gave it their heartiest endorsement. The great body of Protestants soon accepted it as their standard, and appealed to it in all their discussions. Even the Remonstrants and the Menonites, although they examined the work with lynx-eyed determination to condemn it, could not find anything of which to complain. In those places where there was any reference to free-will or predestination, foreseen faith or conditional grace, they were compelled to admit that the translation was such as the original demanded, and they decided to introduce it among their churches.

Occasionally, indeed, since then a voice has been heard suggesting improvement. In the early part of this century Van der Palm, professor of Oriental languages at Leyden, made a new translation which has great literary merit; and a few years ago Kuenen and

Hooykaas issued the Old Testament, revised according to the modern school of criticism. But neither of these has found much favor. In 1854 the General Synod appointed a committee of fourteen to revise the old translation. Their revision of the New Testament was published in 1867, but has met with such a cold reception that only the New Testament has appeared. Except in the introduction of a more modern spelling and the change of a few obsolete expressions the Staten-Bijbel remains as it was first published more than two hundred and fifty years ago.

As an illustration of the extreme care with which the text of this translation has been guarded, we note the fact that when, by the fault of an early printer, the word "grenzen," (borders) dropped out of Josh., 13:2, it was only after a discussion of sixteen years, and the action of several different provincial Synods, and the final consent of the States-General, that the lost word was restored to the text.

When the work of translating was completed, the orginal documents of the revisers, with the annotated proof-sheets, were placed in a box and secured by eight locks. This

was deposited at Leyden, and every three years a committee, composed of two ministers from each provincial Synod, one from the Walloon Synod, two delegates from the States-General, the burgomaster of the city, with his secretary, and the regent of theology in the University of Leyden, solemnly opened the box and exhibited the documents one by one, to show they were all there. This was continued until the revolution of 1795 put an end to the custom.[1]

That the Staten-Bijbel deserves such confidence is easily seen if we look at some of its renderings. It will be noticed that in many cases it approaches more nearly to our revised English version than to the old or authorized version.

In Ex., 11:2, our old English version reads, "Let every man borrow of his neighbor." The Staten-Bijbel says, "eischen" (demand). In Judges, 15:19, our old version says, "God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw." The Staten-Bijbel reads, "Die in Lechi," making Lechi a proper name, as it is correctly given in our revised version. Ps., 10:4, in our authorized version reads, "God is not in all

[1] Ypij en Dermout, II, 379.

his thoughts." The Staten-Bijbel says, "All zijne gedachten zijn, dat er geen God is" (All his thoughts are, that there is no God), which agrees with our revised version, and is much more poetical and vigorous than the old rendering. In Isa., 9:6, among the titles spoken of, one is, in our old version, "The Everlasting Father." The Staten-Bijbel renders this, "Vader der eeuwigheid," which is in harmony with the best modern scholarship. In John, 5:35, our old version reads, "He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a time to rejoice in his light." The Greek text has λύχνος (luchnos) for light in the first place here, and φως (phos) in the second. The Staten-Bijbel recognizes these different Greek words by using "kaars" (candle) for the first, and "licht" for the second. The revised version makes the distinction by using the words "lamp" and "light." In Phil., 3:20, we read in our authorized version, "Our conversation is in heaven." The Staten-Bijbel says, "Onze wandel" (course of life). In Heb., 2:16, our old version says, "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." The Staten-Bijbel says, "Hij neemt de engelen niet aan, maar

Hij neemt het zaad Abrahams aan." (He took not hold of angels, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham.) This agrees with our revised version, and accurately expresses the Greek.

In general it may be said that the Staten-Bijbel is much less given to the insertion of words for which there is no original, and in so far deserves our commendation.

It would be easy to reverse this comparison between the English and the Staten-Bijbel, and show that in some instances the English is superior, but the fact that the Staten-Bijbel in so many instances agrees with our revised version, rather than with the old version, shows how carefully it was made.

Such, then, is the origin of the Book which has been one of the most powerful agencies in molding the national character of the Netherlands. Its influence has been felt everywhere, and wherever felt, has been pure and inspiring. Like the similar translation in Germany and England, it has had more to do in forming and elevating the language than any other book. It was made at a time when thought was breaking loose from its old trammels and piercing out into new and unknown regions. The old forms could no longer hold the young

giant. The language was as plastic as the thought of the time, and the translators seized upon the better elements and fixed them forever as the standard of pure and strong thought. Buskin Huet says that while there are some defects, yet in the more prominent parts the language of the translation is excelled by no one down to this present day. In another place he says that the Staten-Bijbel is one of the good chapters in the national life of the Netherlanders in the seventeenth century, and is moreover the best and most enduring fruit coming from the orthodox during that period. Wynne, in his "Fatherland's History," says, "Upon the later language the Staten-Bijbel has exerted an incalculable influence." Potgieter, in 1839, says, "It is the most manly Dutch that ever was written." Again I quote from Huet,[1] who can usually find enough to complain of when examining the work of the Church, who says, "Neither Hooft, nor Huygens, nor Vondel, nor even the popular Cats, was in any such degree the style-masters of the Netherland people as the translators of the Staten-Bijbel. It can be said that from this Book the great multitude

[1] Vol. II, 92.

of the Hollanders for the first time learned their Dutch as distinct from the mediæval Netherlandish, and I have simply to remind you of the native poetry of De Costa to show that for the expression of a certain kind of poetical thoughts the language of the Staten-Bijbel continues to be one of the most intensely national vehicles which has ever existed in the Netherlands." And this is the uniform testimony.

What that translation has done for the Church and the spiritual life of the Netherlands no man can tell. Could we know how many volumes of it have been issued, could we measure the joy it has brought to those in trouble, the strength its simple but majestic words have given to those passing through great trials, how many wandering ones have been by it led to forsake their sins and return to their heavenly Father's house, then indeed we might say how much that book has been worth to the Netherlands. Until then we may well thank God that he has given such a treasure to his people, so that in all their spiritual needs they never fail to find that truth which is essential to their salvation.

The French Translations

The French Translations

In writing a sketch of the translation of the Bible into the French language two obstacles are at once encountered. There is almost no literature available from which we can trace the progress of the work, and there is no existing French translation which stands out with such commanding importance as to become a standard with which all others may be compared. One might almost ascribe the failure of Protestantism in France to keep pace with Protestantism in Germany, Holland, and England to this one fact, that at no time has the Bible been to the French what it has been to the other nations. Too often the apparent aim of the translator has been to establish his own convictions and decry the positions of his opponent, until the one supreme object in translating — the impartial setting forth of Scripture truth—has been forgotten. Hence it has come to pass that we find two distinct lines of translation, the Protestant and the

Roman Catholic, and the numerous French translations now circulating will, by a very casual examination, reveal the religious convictions of the persons from whom they have issued. But a study of the efforts which have been made brings out many facts of great interest.

The movement for a popular French translation may be traced to the Catharai (Albigenses) of Southern France, who had a literal translation of the New Testament as early as the middle of the twelfth century. It takes more definite form among the followers of Peter Waldo, or Waldes, who died about 1179. The story is that Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, having become acquainted with the teachings of the Scriptures, determined to make a translation of them, or more likely paid others for making one for him, that they might be circulated among his people. Just how much of the Bible was thus translated, or whether his work was anything more than an adaptation of what had been done among the Catharai to meet the needs of his own people, cannot now be determined. One authority says the writings of the prophets and apostles were thus translated. An-

other says the work included also the Psalms and "Both Laws"—i. e., the Mosaic law and the Gospel. It is altogether probable that the work grew as the people demanded it. As the art of printing was not yet discovered, the number of copies was quite limited, but good use was made of what they had. The people eagerly read them and committed them to memory, some being able to repeat entire books of the Bible. Those who were preparing for the ministry were required to commit to memory "All the chapters of Matthew and John, all the Canonical Epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets."[1]

About 1170 Peter Comester prepared a work which was destined to have great influence. It was called "Historica Scholastica." It was written in Latin, and contained the leading historical facts of both the Old and the New Testaments, the Apocrypha, selections from Josephus, and even from heathen authors. The more didactic and poetical portions of the Scripture were omitted. This soon became very popular. In 1291-1294 Guiars des Moulins, canon of St. Peter, in Ayre, trans-

[1]Reuss, II, 483. Griesseler, II, 549.

lated this work of Comester into French, but conforming the text more fully to that of the Vulgate, and adding some portions of the Scriptures which had been omitted by Comester. Later writers made still further improvements, and added other portions of the Scriptures. It was first printed, in two great folios, for Charles VIII, about 1487, and went through many editions afterward, the chief among them being edited by the King's confessor, de Rely, Bishop of Angers. At least twelve editions of this work were published, mostly at Paris, the last in 1545.

Much interest centers in this work. Its importance as an educator was very great. While at first it contained little more than an imperfect statement of the historical parts of the Scriptures, it was in the later editions gradually conformed to the text of the Vulgate, and thus brought to the people the truth in purer form. When first issued it obtained a great circulation, but as better work was done it gradually disappeared until copies of it are now very rare.[1]

During this period separate books of the Bible were translated by different authors.

[1]Townley, I, 299, 516.

In 1523 Simon de Colines translated the entire New Testament. In 1525 he followed this by the Psalter, and in 1528 he finished the Old Testament. It was printed at Antwerp by Martin Lempereur. Like most efforts of the kind, it was bitterly opposed by the Roman Catholic authorities, and finally proscribed.

A great advance in the work of furnishing a French translation is seen when we come to the work of Jacques le Fevre de Etaples, or as he is more generally known, Jacob Faber Stapulensis, professor of belles-lettres and philosophy in the Sorbonne, Paris. He was acquainted with the work of Luther, and was one of the pioneers of the Reformation in France. Feeling the need of a better translation of the Scriptures for his countrymen, in 1523-1525, almost simultaneously with Luther's New Testament in Germany, he issued the New Testament in three parts, at Paris. In 1530 he published the entire Bible, in folio, at Antwerp. When the New Testament was issued he was expelled from his professorship and compelled to flee from France. An edict was issued in 1546 by the Roman Catholic authorities against him and his work, in which the following statement is found: "It is

neither expedient nor useful for the Christian public that any translation of the Bible should be permitted to be printed; but that they ought to be suppressed as injurious." It was also ordered that any person possessing a copy of it should deliver it up within eight days.

Le Fevre's work was based on the Vulgate, and aimed for the first time in French translation to give a faithful rendering of that text. It was not destined in itself to become the popular Bible of the French people, but it prepared the way for such a boon. So bitter was the feeling of the Roman Catholic Church against the idea of Bible translation that Le-Fevre did not put his name to the first edition of his New Testament, and so little did it satisfy the Protestants that they never officially recognized it. Its very publication was carried on chiefly outside of France.

The great value of his work consisted not so much in its intrinsic merits as in the fact that, like Wycliffe, he was a pioneer, preparing the way for the more acceptable efforts of later translators. His work became the pattern which both Protestants and Roman Catholics have followed.[1]

[1]Reuss, II, 492.

Le Fevre's work was revised in 1550 by the Theological Faculty at Louvain, so as to render it more acceptable to the Roman Catholic Church, and for a century afterward was used by them in their efforts to displace the Protestant versions which were eagerly read by the Catholics.

In 1608 it was again revised by Pierre de Besse, and again in 1621 by Pierre de Frizon, who took the precaution to put in it directions for distinguishing Catholic French Bibles from those of the Huguenots or Protestants.[1]

The rapid changes in the character of the French language finally put an end to its usefulness and called for new efforts on the part of both Protestants and Catholics. Leaving for the present the work among the Protestants, we trace the record made by the Catholics.

More than a century passed, during which there were many attempts, like that of Rene Benoist, in 1556, all of which, for one reason or another, ended in failure, before we come to the great work of the brothers Antoine and Louis Isaac le Maitre de Sacy, who made a new translation of the entire Bible. Antoine

[1]Herzog, Real-Encyc., Vol. 13, 99.

is generally regarded as the translator of the New Testament and his brother of the Old, although the precise division of labor between them is not well known. The translation of the Old Testament was made while the author was in the Bastile, from which he was liberated on the day of its publication.[1] The New Testament was first published in 1667 at Mons (Amsterdam), and the Old Testament in 1668. It was accompanied with numerous notes. This translation, like all having the approval of the Roman Catholic Church, was made from the Vulgate. It has been frequently republished, with and without notes, and often with changes in the text, and is still the most common version in the Catholic Church, although not used in the liturgical services of the church.[2] Up to a very recent period it was regarded as the most perfect translation in the French language. An edition of it has been issued by the English Society for promoting Christian Knowledge and by the British and Foreign Bible Society for general circulation among French-speaking people.[3] The relation of this translation to the Roman

[1]Townley, II, 471.
[2]Weiss, II, 508, 520.
[3]Cust, 79.

Catholic Church is worth noticing. At its first publication it had the approval of the Bishop of Cambray and the King of Spain, but was soon after condemned by Pope Clement IX, and a little later by Innocent XI and the French King, because it was "Too favorable to the Protestants, confirming in many places the immoralities of the heretics."[1] At the present time the Roman clergy tolerate its circulation.

In 1877 another attempt was made to provide a French translation which would be acceptable to the Roman Catholic Church. The Bishops of France, admitting that nothing could stop the popular reading of the Bible, and lamenting that so many Roman Catholics read the Protestant versions and thus acquired a disregard for the ancient dogmas, besought the Pope to authorize an effort to secure a translation which would justify their endorsement. The Pope, after waiting two and a half years, gave a carefully guarded assent, whereupon the Abbe Glaire, formerly dean of the Theological Faculty of Paris, published a new version, which has secured the approval of the clergy. The Abbe tells us that he spent forty years in study before he undertook to

[1] Townley, II, 470.

publish his work, his first thought being simply to prepare a revision of de Sacy's version. This idea he abandoned because he wished to make greater use of the Hebrew and Greek than that would allow. He further says that he has made a special effort to preserve the admirable simplicity of the original, taking Jerome as his model in this respect. It is accompanied with the usual notes, without which no Bible is allowed to circulate with the approval of the Roman Church. This translation is one of the best yet issued under Roman Catholic authority, and is in the main a faithful rendering of the Vulgate text. It is at least much better than we might expect when we remember that one of the leading reasons for its existence is to counteract the influence of the Protestant versions.[1]

We can refer to but one other effort begun with the approval of the Roman clergy and the Pope. In 1886 Henri Lasserre published a French translation which states on the title-page that it is issued "Avec l'Imprimatur de l'Archeveche de Paris," and which was dedicated to "Notre Dame de Loudres." During the progress of the translation portions of

[1]Cust, 81.

it sent to the Pope for his inspection were acknowledged with approval, and his apostolic blessing bestowed upon the translator. Lasserre used the Vulgate text as the basis of his work. He tells us that he does not translate servilely, nor yet give a paraphrase, but puts it into such form that the genius of the French language should take the place of the Latin language, instead of being in that chopped, hoppy, rebus-like style which characterizes existing French translations, so that he may make the Gospel a book which any one can read, understand, and admire. He discards the verse divisions, and prints in paragraphs. His notes are brief, and the translation good, although presenting some strange readings.

It was received with great popular approval, and twenty-five editions of it were soon exhausted. But it was suddenly withdrawn. The approval of the Archbishop was given November 11, 1886, and on the 19th of December, 1887, a few days over one year, it encountered the fate which is saddest of all for a Roman Catholic publication. It was placed in the Index Expurgatorius, and all good Catholics were forbidden to read it.[1]

[1] Cust, 83.

We now turn to review the work done by the French Protestants.

The translation made by Le Fevre (1523-1530) was a great improvement on all previous efforts, but did not satisfy those who favored the more advanced ideas taught by the reformers.

This lack was in a manner supplied when, in 1535, Pierre Robert Olivetan, or Olivetau, sent forth a translation embodying the new ideas. Olivetan was one of the leaders of the Reformation in France, and is said to have led Calvin to the study and acceptance of the principles of the Reformation. He was a native of Picardy, in France, but prepared and published the first edition of his work in Neuchatel, Switzerland, on account of the opposition of his countrymen. This first edition, in two folio volumes, seems to have been intended for use among the Waldenses, for they furnished the fifteen hundred crowns in gold required for printing it.

While Olivetan worked independently, he made much use of Le Fevre's translation. His knowledge of Latin and Greek was not very critical, but his lack in this direction was amply compensated for by the assistance of

his relative, John Calvin, who revised the work before it was published. Some have even tried to prove that Calvin was the real translator, but there seems no good reason for such a conclusion.

A second edition, published at Geneva, is known as the Sword Bible (Bible de l'Epee), because it has a sword on the title-page.[1] In an edition published at Lyons in 1545 the revision of Calvin is expressly stated. Another edition in 1551 contains still further improvements by Calvin, and Beza translates for it the Apocryphal books.

Reuss presents the general character of this work of Olivetan as follows: "The Apocrypha repeats the Antwerp Polyglot; in the New Testament it is dependent upon Erasmus, and only in the Old Testament is it prepared from the original text with really praiseworthy diligence and independent scholarship."[2]

The first thorough revision of this translation was made in 1588 by the "Venerable Compagnie" of Geneva, an association of leading reformers, among whom were Beza and

[1] Townley, II, 126.
[2] II, 493.

Calvin. They carefully compared the translation with the orginal Hebrew and Greek, but left its essential features unchanged. In this form it was published in many editions, and, amid the fierce persecutions which followed, it became the word of consolation to many a faithful soul in prison and amid the flames. Its hold upon the Protestant churches was so strong that it could not be superseded, although many new translations were offered. It was frequently modified to make it conform more closely to the genius of the French language, or to adapt it to the theological views of its editors, but, without material change, it may still be recognized in the various editions published by the great Bible Societies of Europe and America. Its numerous revisions show its defects, while the fact that no other has been able to take its place shows its essential value.[1]

Of Olivetan's work Weiss says:[2] "Seldom printed in France, oftener in foreign lands, this Bible, not so much like a child neglected at the birth as like one more and more corrupted in the bringing up, has bequeathed to

[1] Townley, II, 242, 473.
[2] II, 493.

succeeding generations the sense of its defects and the endless task of correcting them; it has become the only church edition, yet the church has never been able to bring its text into a fixed state; and in its numberless transformations and improvements it has always lagged behind the language and behind science."

The first important attempt to revise Olivetan's translation, after the edition of the Geneva pastors, was made by David Martin, a native of Languedoc. He was prominent as a theologian, and had a critical knowledge of the French language. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes he became pastor of the Walloon Church at Utrecht, in Holland, where he was held in very high esteem by his Dutch colleagues. Even the Roman Catholics had such great respect for his Christian character that they assisted him to escape when compelled to flee from France. His aim in revision was chiefly literary, removing obsolete and objectionable words and idioms, and replacing them with those in common use. With the approval of the Synod of Belgium, he published the New Testament in 1696 at Antwerp, and the entire Bible in 1707 at

Amsterdam. Various notes accompanied the first edition, many of those in the New Testament being afterward used in a Roman Catholic version published at Brussels in 1700.

This revision of Martin was a great improvement on the work of Olivetan, and had a very extensive circulation. With various amendments, chiefly in 1842-1850, it is still published by the great Bible Societies and by the English Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The Paris Bible Society, which formerly printed it, does not now do so.[1]

Half a century later, in 1744, Jean Frederic Osterwald produced another revision of Olivetan's work, which was much more radical in its nature than that of Martin. He was born in Neuchatel, Switzerland, then one of the great centers of French Protestant influence, and studied under some of the most celebrated theologians of the day. In connection with his associates, Winnfels and Turretin, he rose to great influence. He felt the need of a more practical piety, which should occupy itself less with forms of orthodoxy, and manifest more of that holy living required of the Christian. He deplored the divisions among Christians,

[1]Reuss, II, 520.

and wrote several books to arouse them to the performance of duty.

His revision embodied the ideas which he everywhere advocated. Antiquated words were exchanged for more modern ones, and the effort was made to bring the translation into more complete harmony with the language and the spiritual needs of the times. Osterwald's work was again revised by the Bible Societies in 1868, and in 1887 it was still more thoroughly revised by M. Froissard and other French pastors, and published by the French Bible Society.[1]

Although this work of Osterwald has never had the formal approval of the Protestants, it may be regarded as the standard among them, being more generally used than any other. With all its defects, and they are many and easily recognized, it has continued to have an extensive circulation wherever the French language is used.

Many recent attempts have been made to overcome its obvious defects, but none of them have been of sufficient character to command the confidence of the different sections of the French church. And in the present divided

[1]Encyc. Missions, I, 380.

condition of the Protestant Church in France it is perhaps too much to expect such a result may soon be reached. As it is, Martin's revision has been generally used in Switzerland and Holland, while that of Osterwald has been preferred in France. A movement which took shape in 1886 seems more hopeful than anything yet done. A committee composed of Reformed, Lutherans, Walloons, State and Free Church adherents, French, Swiss, Hollanders, and Belgians, is trying to agree upon such a revision of Osterwald as will make it in reality the Bible of the French Protestants. For the sake of the reformed churches speaking the French language it is devoutly to be hoped that they may at last succeed.[1]

Only one other effort demands our attention. In 1873 Louis Segond, professor at Lausanne, Switzerland, published an entirely new French version, which marks an epoch in French translations. He translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek, instead of resting on the Vulgate. He gives as rules by which he is governed, exactness, clearness, and accuracy, while he aims to express the ideas in good literary style, and with a religious turn of ex-

[1] Bib. Soc. Record, July, 1894, 105.

pression. It is philological rather than theological. As a result, it frequently clashes with the older translations, both Protestant and Catholic. It has not found an official recognition anywhere, but meets a ready acceptance among those who are dissatisfied with the older efforts. The younger clergy of the Roman Catholic Church and many prominent Protestant pastors make use of it. The University Press at Oxford, England, has printed an elegant edition, the prose portions in paragraphs, the poetical in verse. The author accompanied the text with notes, maps, prefaces, thus giving it all the advantages of modern study. Its most serious defect is that under a professed independence of theological terms, it often reveals an evident dislike of old doctrines and a determination to weaken them by translations needlessly offensive to the reader.[1]

It is not necessary to examine other efforts among the French translators in order to see that there is a painful lack of uniformity, not merely in details, but in the broad, fundamental qualities which will always mark work well done. The French mind does not as

[1]Rice, 40.

yet seem to have so entered into the spirit of the original as to make a translation which will commend itself to what we might call the common instincts of the Christian heart. And this must be admitted, in principle, if not to the same extent, of the Protestant versions, as well as of those issuing from the Roman Catholic Church. None of them is large enough to satisfy the demands of the Christian life. They have been made for a purpose, and that purpose has been to establish a position, rather than to illuminate the Word of God. Of them all, it may be said that they have been dominated by the intellect rather than by the heart, and hence do not properly fill that high office for which the Bible was given. When God shall give to France such a translation as He has given to Germany, England, and Holland, it will be seen that the efforts thus far made have been but stepping-stones to the desired result, and then may we hope to see the Protestant Church in that land, healed of her dissensions, rejoice in a new spiritual vigor, and become a mighty factor in the spiritual regeneration of her people.

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